READ PERSPECTIVES

SPRING 1995 • VOL. II, NO. 1

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– Russell Gersten
– Thomas J. Keating
– Susan Unok Brengelman

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A Publication of The READ Institute

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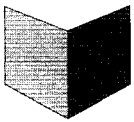
Production: Patricia Whitelaw-Hill
Layout: Schwa Design Group
Printing and Binding: Masterprint, Inc.



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INTRODUCTION

Assessments of three significant studies comprise the current volume of *READ Perspectives.* In keeping with our on-going practice of publishing new data on the education of limited-English students, two of the studies cover recent research on programs and demographics while the third study provides a detailed review of practical, exemplary teaching strategies. Both types of information are useful to school administrators, teachers, scholars, and the large and rapidly growing community of language minority citizens.

Of immediate importance, these new data solidly support the insistent demand being voiced now in state legislatures and in Washington that substantial changes and improvements are urgently needed in the education of language minority students. The GAO study defines the problems and their scope; the California study candidly recognizes the lack of evidence for the superiority of native language instruction as beneficial to limited-English students; and the Special Alternative Instructional Programs study presents solutions in the form of successful, workable programs. Attention in each study is now rightly directed not to imposing one-model-fits-all regulations but to demanding clear evidence of student success.

THE GAO STUDY

The first study here reviewed was conducted by the U. S. General Accounting Office at the request of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Its title suggests the focus of the study: *Limited-English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts.* Data collection includes fresh demographics on the dramatic increase of immigrant and limited-English students in U. S. classrooms; on where these students are concentrated, and on the burgeoning variety of languages and national backgrounds represented in this population—the study thus provides valuable data for educators and policy makers that is not always easily available. Of particular interest as well is the detailed analysis of five representative school districts with rapidly growing LEP populations and the problems that are common to them all. Indeed, the problems highlighted in the five districts studied by the GAO are prevalent in public schools with limited-English students across the nation.

While the GAO study provides a needed overview of the serious issues confronting U. S. public schools and the degree to which these problems have increased in severity in the past decade, some of its findings are disappointing since they do not convincingly grow out of the data collected or rest on sufficient evidence. For example, the authors state that they will not address the question of which teaching method—bilingual or non-bilingual—is most effective but then they assert that native language teaching programs are preferable to other methods, a recommendation that is not supported by the reliable research studies in the field. (Baker-DeKanter, 1981; Gersten, 1992; New York City Public Schools, 1994) Even so strong an advocate for native language programs as Professor Kenji Hakuta of Stanford University admits that, "an awkward tension blankets the lack of empirical demonstration of the success of bilingual education." (Hakuta, 1986)

Curiously, the study does not at all address the costs of different types of bilingual education programs, even though "cost" is part of the study's title. However, a national study of the costs of bilingual education, state by state, has just been completed and will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives.* (ALEC, 1994)

THE CALIFORNIA STUDY

Rossier's critique of the California state study, *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity: An Evaluation of Programs for Pupils with Limited Proficiency in English,* finds severe flaws in this two-year study of the quality of education in the state with the largest number of limited-English students in the nation. Authors of the California study focused their data collection and analysis on the years 1989-1991, although bilingual programs in that state have been in place for 18 years.

There are several problems with the California study that receive close attention in Rossier's report. The makeup of the study committee, its attention to "political considerations," the questions it chose (or did not choose) to investigate—comprise central aspects of the evaluation plan that resulted in a less than satisfactory final report. In the end, the California study reveals a number of crucial problems in the education of over a million limited-English students in that state: lack of evidence for the superiority of native language instruction as beneficial for LEP students; lack of accountability in the assessment and documenting of student progress; retention of language minority students in bilingual programs longer than necessary.

Rossier's sternest criticism of the California evaluation is that it does not carry out the task set out by the legislature, namely, to answer this central question: What is

the most productive and cost effective program for helping LEP students to become fluent in English as the means of gaining access to an equal educational opportunity in our schools? California is not alone in ranking low on the accountability standard as far as LEP students are concerned. Massachusetts, which passed the first state law in the U. S. mandating bilingual education in 1971, has still not consistently collected student achievement data. As a bilingual/ESL program director in that state, I have heard the evasions and excuses for 24 years. A state commission on bilingual education has issued new guidelines on accountability "as soon as suitable tests are developed," but this announcement rings hollow if past performance is any indicator. (Bilingual Education Commission, 1994)

THE SPECIAL ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS STUDY

William Tikunoff and his associates, under the auspices of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), published the first extensive survey of successful English-language intensive programs in U. S. public schools in 1991. Tikunoff's meticulous research on teaching and learning is highly regarded by professionals in the field of language minority education. The novelty of this particular work lies in the fact that almost no account heretofore has been taken in educational research of programs for LEP students that do not use native language teaching. From 1968, when the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) was first passed, to 1988, 96 percent of federal funding for demonstration projects and research studies went to native language teaching programs, with a meager 4 percent allotted to programs concentrating on English language teaching. The funding formula was revised in 1988 and "Special Alternative Instructional Programs," as these English-teaching programs are designated by OBEMLA, are now allocated 25 percent of Title VII funds.

Tikunoff and associates selected nine school districts with well-documented success in educating limited-English students and, through careful observation of classrooms and examination of school records, present the reader with detailed data on what works. How do these particular schools in suburban, rural and metropolitan settings manage to teach their LEP students English rapidly and effectively and to teach school subjects in English to students from many different language backgrounds? The study supplies the answers to this central question in language minority education by describing the program features in each school that contribute to positive outcomes for LEP students.

Of greatest value to teachers and school administrators, Tikunoff et al. focus on practical techniques and strategies that teachers use to promote learning. For teachers of LEP students there is the dual challenge of teaching English language literacy—reading, speaking, writing and understanding—and the teaching of school subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies in English. As a former teacher of bilingual students and program director, I judge the Tikunoff study to have practical utility. It lays out a blueprint for building solidly efficient English-language based instruction for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The key to success is the application of the lessons gleaned from the Tikunoff research: restructuring of schools to respond more flexibly to language minority students' needs for higher levels of English proficiency and the need for broad staff training in how to merge English language development with content area instruction.

All in all, we are presented with a richly provocative range of material in the three studies reviewed in this volume.

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.
Editor, *READ Perspectives*

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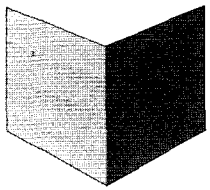
A Review of the U.S. General Accounting Office Study on Limited-English Students



A Review of the U.S. General Accounting Office Study on Limited English Students

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.

The General Accounting Office, the U. S. government's watchdog agency since 1921, conducts studies in all areas of government activity at the request of members of Congress. The findings from this agency's reports are routinely cited by lawmakers in deciding whether to initiate, support, revise or cancel programs. The degree of its influence can be gauged by the fact that federal agencies accept three fourths of its recommendations and Congress follows more than half of its suggestions for legislative action. *(New York Times,* October 17, 1994, 1, B10)

Scope and Methodology

The GAO study, *Limited-English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts,* published in January 1994, was commissioned by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. The task was to collect data on the impact of immigrant children and limited-English-proficient (LEP) children in U. S. public schools, specifically those children ages 5-17 whose knowledge of English is so limited that they need special help to benefit from classroom instruction in English. The study addresses these four questions:

1. What are the characteristics of LEP students, nationally and in selected districts, and the challenges districts face in educating these students?

2. How do selected districts with LEP students from linguistically diverse backgrounds educate these students, including the extent to which academic subjects are taught in the students' native languages?

3. What approaches have been identified as promising when diversity of languages spoken by students makes native language instruction difficult?

4. Do key federal programs targeted to LEP students provide the types of support that districts need to implement programs to serve these students?

The data collection was conducted from July 1992 to July 1993 and includes fresh demographics on the national trends in school age enrollments of LEP students as well as a close analysis of five representative school districts with large LEP populations.

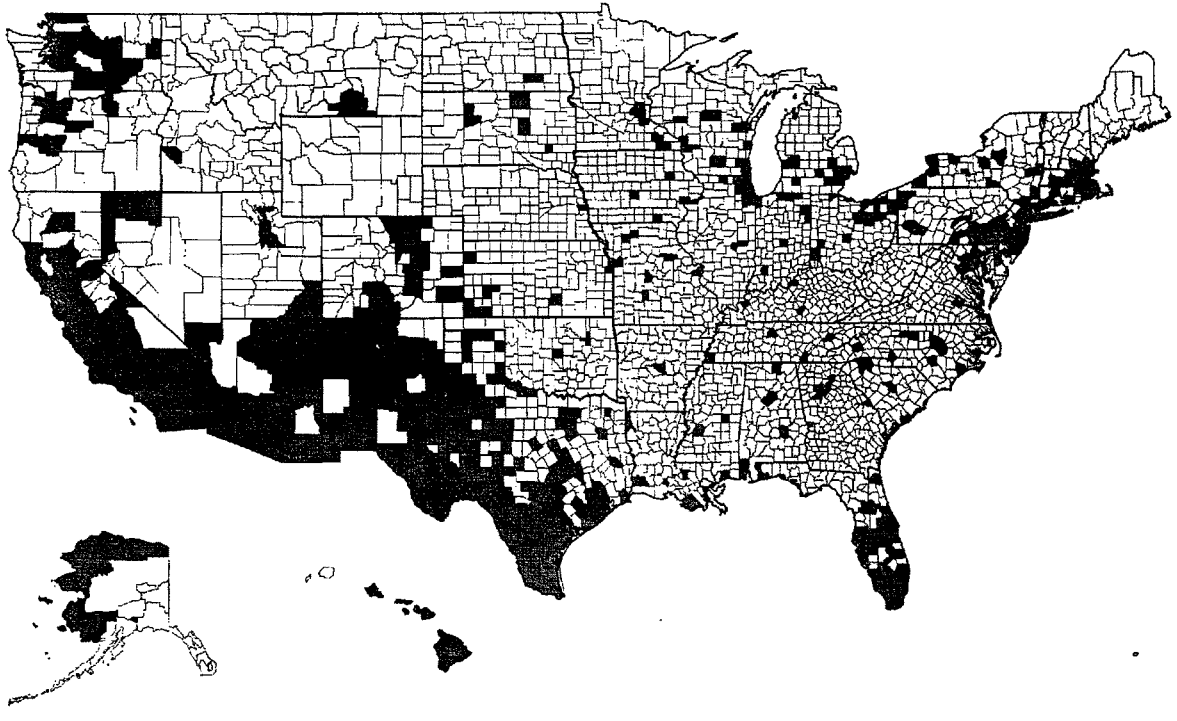
A CHANGING SCHOOL POPULATION

The study's statistical data on the dramatic increase of immigrant students in U.S. classrooms between 1980 and 1990, on the explosive increase in the number of languages and national backgrounds represented in this population, and on the areas where these students are concentrated is valuable information for educators and policy makers that is not always easily available. (GAO, figure 1, 6-7) The federal government's ten-year census, for example, collects data on less than 15 non-English languages spoken by U. S. residents, while the GAO study discovered school districts where 90 different home languages were represented among the LEP students. Although 72 percent of LEP students nationwide are concentrated in only six states—California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Texas—about one-third of the counties in 47 states have substantial numbers (500 or more) of LEP students. (GAO, 5)

The population of limited-English students in U. S. public schools has increased by 26 percent between 1980 and 1990, a much greater increase than the general school population, and now numbers between 2.3 and 3.5 million students, according to GAO estimates. (GAO, 34-35) LEP students represent a growing proportion of students, making up 5.2 percent of all students nationally (up from 3.2 percent in 1980) but in the 25 largest urban school districts, LEP enrollment has risen from 9 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1990. Although Spanish is still the first language of the majority of LEP students in the U. S. (60 percent), limited-English students in most schools represent, on average, 5 or more different languages. In the sample schools studied by the GAO, the numbers were even higher, with 13 to 90 languages represented. (GAO, 34-35)

One intriguing fact is mentioned only briefly and never explained: immigrants account for only 43 percent of the limited-English students in our schools. Indeed, the GAO includes in this percentage children born in the U. S. to immigrants who arrived in the last ten years. Are 57 percent of the limited-English students native-

Figure 1
More than 500 counties have substantial numbers of LEP students



Shaded areas indicate the 533 counties in which at least 5 percent or 500 students were LEP, according to 1990 decennial Census data.

Source:: GAO Report *Limited English Proficiency*

born and, if so, why are such large numbers not fluent in the common national language? Even allowing for the fact that some part of this number may be students from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and officially citizens of the United States, the 57 percent figure is baffling. It is reasonable to speculate, therefore, that some number of these students may be inappropriately identified as "limited-English," as has been documented in studies such as Rossell and Baker (1987). No fully satisfactory explanation is apparent for the fact that such a high proportion of limited-English students are not immigrants. In a private conversation with one of the GAO regional managers, I was told that the agency has not found an agreed upon definition of what a "limited-English" person is and that they have included in this category children who speak English but may not read and write it well enough for school work. If this is the case, then there may be a large number of students who are wrongly enrolled in programs where they are being taught in another language when what they urgently need is remedial help in reading and writing in English.

CONCLUSIONS FROM FIVE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS

The five representative urban school districts visited and described by the GAO auditors yield an invaluable picture of schools undergoing radical changes in student make-up and in the efforts being made to supply an appropriate education for these students. Figure 2, prepared from data in the GAO report, maps the student changes in the five districts.

Certain problems are common to all five districts and, indeed, are known to be prevalent in public schools with limited-English students nationwide:

- immigrant students are almost 100% non-English proficient on arrival in U. S. schools
- the arrival of limited-English students is unpredictable and occurs at different times during the school year, causing major upheavals in classrooms and educational programs
- some middle and high school age students lack schooling in their native land due to unsettled conditions and are, therefore, pre-literate in any language
- a high level of family transiency and poverty exists, both of which negatively affect children's academic development

- parental involvement in or understanding of students' schooling is lacking
- there is an acute shortage of bilingual teachers and of native language texts in dozens of languages, as well as poor quality of Spanish language texts and lack of student assessment instruments
- funds are inadequate to train teachers or to develop programs.

Figure 2
Limited-English Proficient Students in Five Districts and Their Proportion of the Total Enrollment, 1982-1992

District	Total Enrollment		LEP Enrollment				Number of Languages 1992**
	1982	1992	1982	%	1992	%	
A	193,701	197,413	24,021	12.40%	39,569	20.0%	7***
B	12,963	11,998	1,256	9.90	1,427	11.8	12
C	46,752	73,647	3,092	6.60	20,937	28.4	88
D	24,565	28,739	4,395	17.80	7,108	24.7	57
E	57,498	74,084	7,815	13.50	24,093	32.5	37

* Percentage of the total enrollment
** Number of languages present in 1982 was not available for the most part
*** District A reported 60 additional languages but documents specifying those languages were not available. They reported 94% of LEP students as Spanish speakers and 2400 students speaking other languages.

Prepared by R. P. Porter from data in GAO report.

GAO Bias

This study, while stating that it will not address the issue of which instructional method—bilingual or nonbilingual—is most effective, does in fact weigh in heavily on the side of native language instruction as preferable to other educational approaches. This attitude is subtly present throughout the report and reflects the GAO bias noted on the publication of its earlier study, *Bilingual Education: A New Look at the Research Evidence (1987).*

Early in the current report we find this statement: "A substantial body of research points to the effectiveness of bilingual instruction; many educators believe it is preferable to non-bilingual instruction for educating LEP students, both for teaching English and for teaching academic subjects while the student is learning English." (GAO, 4) A few pages later, we read: "One study, funded by the Department of Education, identified exemplary programs that use these promising nonbilingual approaches. This study suggests the potential effectiveness of these approaches, but many experts—including one of the study's authors—caution that these approaches should not replace bilingual instruction, if such instruction could otherwise be provided." (GAO, 12) To support this judgment, the GAO study cites only a few studies authored by professionally recognized advocates of bilingual instruction. It is, in fact, widely known in the field that research on the effectiveness of bilingual instruction is of generally poor quality and that reliable studies do not prove any superior benefits for teaching LEP students in their native languages, either in the rapid acquisition of English or in the learning of school subjects. (Danoff, 1977; Baker and De Kanter, 1980; El Paso Study, 1992)

The GAO report does not provide readers with the balanced, objective presentation that we should expect from an agency with an oversight function. It is not the mission of the GAO to promote certain policies, in this case an adherence to the largely unsuccessful but politically popular bilingual programs implemented since 1968. A recent study of the GAO itself by a panel of experts from the National Academy of Public Administration, a nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to increase the effectiveness of federal, state and local governments, stated the following: "Some in Congress have expressed concerns, which the panel shares, that GAO has on occasion moved too far into advocating policy, pushing into policy formulation more appropriate to elected officials." *(New York Times,* 1)

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The GAO report briefly cites the study of nine school districts with exemplary English-based programs in addressing the question of which alternative educational approaches appear to be effective when native language instruction is not practicable. (Tikunoff, 1991) Since the Tikunoff study is reviewed in detail in this volume of *READ Perspectives,* it needs no further discussion here. The GAO report, for its part, catalogues the serious impediments to the full implementation of native language instruction: large numbers of different languages, lack of trained and credentialed teachers fluent in all these languages, lack of published teaching materials in all these languages, lack of assessment instruments in all these languages for monitoring acad-

emic progress, and lack of funding to train teachers working with LEP students. Yet, in spite of the inescapable conclusion that teaching every LEP student in his or her native language is impossible and the fact that there are effective, exemplary methods for helping LEP students to acquire the English language and learn school subjects taught in English, the implication strongly conveyed by this report is that every effort should continue to be made to implement full bilingual programs.

ADEQUACY OF FEDERAL FUNDING

As to the question of the adequacy of federal programs to provide the types of support that districts need to serve these students, the GAO reports on the three principal sources of funding for LEP students. These sources are the Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA), a federal program with an annual budget of $30 million (1992) that provides aid as an entitlement to local districts with 500 or more immigrant students who are in the U. S. three years or less; Title VII, 75 percent of whose approximately $200 million (1992) budget is given to school districts on a competitive grant basis while the remainder funds nine different state and national activities (i.e., technical assistance, graduate fellowships, evaluation); and Title I, the federal program providing remedial reading and math support for low income students.

Title VII and EIEA funding have not kept up with inflation in recent years and the high rate of increase in the numbers of LEP students means that federal funding for these children amounts to less per student by about 40 percent over the past decade. However, it is important to note that the bulk of financial support for bilingual students is not from the federal government but from state and local sources and always has been. The GAO report does not provide data on the cost of any type of bilingual program, information that would be useful in considering the investment needed for different levels of native language or ESL (English as a Second Language) or immersion programs. Cost analysis and student achievement data from the five school districts visited, as a representative sample of what needs to be invested and what outcomes are likely, would be the must useful information for school administrators, legislators and parents of LEP students. (A national survey of the cost of bilingual education has just been published by the American Legislative Exchange Council in Washington, DC, and will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives.*)

The U. S. Department of Education has recommended that Title I programs should be open to limited-English students. (February 1993 report) Until recently, Title I remedial programs offering reading and math tutoring to low achieving stu-

dents from low income families have provided these services to a limited percentage of LEP students. In 1993, for instance, only 35 percent of limited-English students received Title I services. LEP students were excluded from this tutorial program by a narrow eligibility criteria that admitted only students suffering from "educational disadvantages stemming from causes other than language." (GAO, 14-15) As a veteran classroom teacher and assessor of students with special learning problems, I would say that this distinction is very difficult to determine. Children from backgrounds of poverty, unstable families, chaotic living conditions, speaking no English, arrive in our schools with a constellation of problems that result in low achievement in reading and math. Why separate out only the language element to make some of these children ineligible for needed assistance? Finally, in the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, new guidelines were added to Title I giving LEP students access to remedial tutoring in reading and mathematics without restrictions.

Limited-English students are classified as being from low-income families at a rate that is more than twice that of the general population (37% vs. 17%). (GAO, 8) That fact, and the expectation that LEP students are at a temporary disadvantage academically until they master enough English for classroom work, makes their need for Title I services sufficiently convincing. Programs with federal mandates, such as Title VII, Title I, and Special Education, unfortunately, spawn bureaucracies that guard their borders tenaciously by promoting the impression that only certain students "belong" to them. Great improvements in the education of disadvantaged children could be made if there were more effective coordination and cooperation among these educational fiefdoms. The National Advisory and Coordinating Council on Bilingual Education, in its annual report to the U. S. Congress, argued strongly for such collaboration in an essay by council member Dr. Leo Lopez. (NACCBE, 1987) The Seattle Public School District has developed a very promising "blended" model for enriching the education of needy students across program boundaries and this program will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives*.

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE GAO STUDY

Much useful information is contained in this study by the GAO, especially the detailed description of the five representative districts (2 in California, 1 each in Massachusetts, New York, and Texas) and the particular elements that make the education of limited-English students across the country such a challenging proposition. It is disappointing, though, that the report writers have made some of the

same unsupportable assumptions that are routinely presented by advocates of extended native language instruction. The assumptions are these:

1. That bilingual instruction is more effective for the teaching of English and of academic subjects. Over the past 20 years several reliable studies have shown that bilingual instruction is not superior to other teaching approaches for either second language acquisition or content learning, i.e., Danoff, Baker-DeKanter, Ross and Rossell. Two new studies now add to the empirical evidence: *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity,* the 1992 study evaluating programs for LEP students in California, and *Educational Progress of Students in Bilingual and ESL Programs:* A Longitudinal Study, 1990-1994, New York City Public Schools. The California study is reviewed in detail in this present volume yet two arresting conclusions in it are worth highlighting here: (1) the study finds no one educational model, bilingual or non-bilingual, to be the most effective under all conditions, and (2) California public schools do not adequately monitor the academic progress of LEP students, therefore, the state and public cannot hold schools accountable for LEP student achievement. One can hardly credit such a denial of responsibility after 20 years and the billions of dollars invested in California's bilingual education efforts. The New York study, which will be examined thoroughly in the Fall 1995 READ Perspectives, compares the achievement of two large groups—one group in bilingual and one group in intensive ESL programs—with superior outcomes on all counts for the students not receiving native language instruction.

2. That it takes 3-7 years to become fluent enough to do good work in an all-English language classroom. The first-hand experience of teachers across the country is that LEP students can begin to learn subject matter taught in English within a few weeks of entering U.S. schools, given a modified curriculum and trained teachers. This conclusion is strongly supported by recent studies such as the El Paso immersion project, the 1988 Dade County Study, and the 1994 New York City Public Schools study, to name a few. It may take 3 years or longer to become a near-native speaker, reader and writer in a second language but students certainly do not need to wait for that level of proficiency before they begin learning school subjects taught in the second language. I can report with confidence that in my five-year experience as a bilingual teacher I found it possible and preferable to teach subject matter in modified English to limited-English students, successfully, within a few days of their enrollment in school.

3. That ESL is only "a grammatically based method used to help LEP students learn English," suggesting that academic support must be provided in the native

language of LEP students or "they will fall well behind their English-speaking peers over the several years it takes to become fluent in English." (GAO, 3) That is definitely not the case. LEP students greatly benefit from academic support given in English for it helps them to develop their second language as well as learning subject matter. This strategy, called "Content-Based Language Teaching" or "Sheltered English Content Courses," has been strongly promoted by experts in the ESL field for years and tens of thousands of teachers have been trained to use these methods. It is one of the most promising, cutting-edge, approaches in the education of language minority students.

4. That implementing an alternative, English-intensive program would be costly and require many years to develop. Compared to the costs and time needed to implement a full bilingual program—essentially setting up entirely separate schooling—the development of an English-intensive program requires a relatively modest investment. The models—ESL, Sheltered English, Immersion— are available, and can be initiated with a concentrated amount of teacher training and curriculum modification (see Glossary of Terms, p. 50). While various schools across the nation are experimenting with alternatives that use more English and less teaching in the native language, many more school districts are held back from making such changes by lack of information, by state laws mandating only bilingual programs, or by political pressure to conform to the bilingual imperative.

A description of one exemplary working model, "The Newton Alternative to Bilingual Education," appeared in *The Annals*, March 1990. Another noteworthy example of a successful alternative to native language instruction is the El Paso Public Schools' immersion project. A five-year study, published by The READ Institute in 1992, compares the performance of LEP students in an English immersion program with students in a traditional bilingual program. Immersion students, who are taught everything in English from the first day of school, learned English better and faster and scored higher on district tests of school subjects than their peers in the bilingual program. Most important, bilingual program students needed 6-7 years to achieve skills to enter mainstream classrooms compared to immersion students who were successfully mainstreamed in 3-4 years, no longer needing special services. (READ Institute has been providing program development assistance to a number of school districts across the country, districts that had full bilingual programs for years and were disappointed with student achievement.)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overwhelming need to improve access to a quality education for limited-English students so they can survive in the nation's increasingly competitive job markets calls for a massive effort in training (and retraining) teachers to deliver the vital English language and academic support. The numbers of immigrant and limited-English students are growing at a far more rapid pace than the native-born, English-speaking, school population. These demographic changes are expected to continue throughout this decade and beyond. Although Spanish speakers continue to make up an average of 60 percent of all limited-English students, most school districts also enroll children from dozens of other language backgrounds. Tightening of school budgets makes it much more difficult to provide funding for special programs and makes it imperative that districts carefully review these special efforts, in student achievement as well as in cost effectiveness. The following recommendations develop naturally from the accumulated data in the GAO report:

1. Train teachers—All teachers, not just special ESL or bilingual teachers, need some training in how to help LEP students to learn language and subject matter. Courses to provide this training should have been offered through undergraduate and graduate programs for teachers years ago. Because language minority children have been thought of as "belonging" only to bilingual teachers, it has not happened. Integrating LEP students successfully with their English-speaking peers in mainstream classrooms depends on much broader training of all school personnel. I recently taught a course at Westfield State College titled "Educating Language Minority Students," for example, which covered the essentials of second language acquisition, teaching strategies and materials, language testing, and cultural sensitivity in one semester.

Dr. Fred Genesee, president of the international TESOL organization (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), in the January 1995 *TESOL Matters* argues persuasively for the crucial necessity of close collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers. He closes with the wise admonition that "the ultimate goal of teaching ESL to non-English speaking students is to give them the benefits of a challenging and comprehensive general education, not simply to teach them English."

2. Develop Alternative Programs—Because there are numerous different languages represented in the LEP population and because there is no convincing research evidence for the superiority of native language programs, it is time for an attitudinal change among educators and program planners. The GAO study highlights the lack of bilingual teachers all over the country as well as the lack of textbooks in all

the languages. Surely it is time to concentrate more effort and resources on programs that can be staffed more readily with trained teachers and on suitable textbooks in the target language, English, and to stop chasing the chimera of native language instruction for over 90 different languages. The crucial point that is often glaringly absent from the discussion of education options for LEP students is the fact that the status of being "limited-English" is truly a temporary condition. Students living in an English-speaking country become adept at the majority language in time, they are not consigned to a permanent state of speaking only their mother tongue. Public schools in the U.S. must organize themselves to respond with measures that will rapidly remove this temporary language barrier rather than operating as if "limited-English" were predetermined to be a long-lasting condition.

3. Collect Comparative Data on Program Outcomes—Although it was not within the scope of its study, I urge the GAO, if the data is available in the five districts surveyed, to publish the following information: What are the results in English language learning and mastery of subject matter for the students receiving bilingual instruction compared with students receiving special English instruction or with students receiving no special help at all? How many years do the students require special help in each program type? How do high school drop-out rates compare? What percentage of students in each program was retained in grade or referred for Special Education?

There is great value in reporting such information when groups of students in the same school district are being compared while receiving different treatments. No amount of description of schools and their special features is useful without an account of how successful the students are as a result of all this effort. It is for this reason that the New York City Public Schools study of October 1994 is so valuable. It compares student achievement among two distinct groups—one receiving only ESL from kindergarten and the other group receiving native language instruction for several years—and reveals the outcome in student performance.

4. Restructure OBEMLA Funding—For twenty-five years, OBEMLA has apportioned most of its funds, through competitive grants, to native-language intensive bilingual programs. I recommend instead that the major part of OBEMLA funding be distributed, on a per capita basis, directly to all school districts with immigrant/LEP students, on the Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA) model. Local districts are most capable of deciding their own priorities for these students and even of pooling some of their resources in regional collaboratives. OBEMLA

could impose firm guidelines as to the use of these funds for teacher training, development of materials and assessments.

What works best is the adaptation of models to local circumstances and the availability of experts to train local staff in the use of strategies and materials compatible with local curriculum and system-wide goals. The best action the federal government can undertake is to redirect some of the present OBEMLA funding to local districts to support these efforts. It is in these training activities that OBEMLA funds could be doing the most good for all school districts that have LEP students. From my own experience as a program director, I found the EIEA funds to be extremely beneficial because they gave us direct support for what was needed to strengthen our particular program. We used these funds for teacher training, curriculum development, support for a multicultural preschool for 3 and 4 year old LEPs, development of LEP student assessments, and workshops for Title I and Special Education personnel on immigrant/LEP issues.

5. Avoid Segregation—The word does not appear in the GAO study and yet segregation is one of the most damaging drawbacks of bilingual programs—the segregation of LEP students by language and ethnicity for most of each school day over several years. In the five districts studied, the percentage of LEP students ranges from 13% to 30%. Are these students better served in programs where the school continues the "linguistic isolation" of the home? Integrating these students with their English-speaking classmates as much as possible is crucial to the early and rapid development of the language skills they need to do their very best in U.S. schools.

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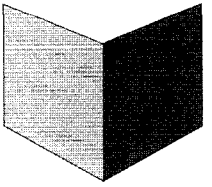
A Critique of California's Evaluation of Programs for Students of Limited-English Proficiency



A Critique of California's Evaluation of Programs for Students of Limited-English Proficiency

Robert E. Rossier, Ph.D.

There can be little argument about what an evaluation should do: It should measure or assess the worth or quality of something having notable or intrinsic interest. An educational evaluation, more particularly, should reveal the value of instructional methodologies or applications—that is, it should answer the question of how well an educational program or treatment meets the needs and goals ascribed to it.

No educational initiative needs more comprehensive and objective evaluation than California's bilingual education system, a 20-year effort to meet the needs of the nearly 20 percent of the state's students who do not know enough English to do regular school work. Yet, this giant instructional system for limited-English proficient (LEP) students—the largest in any state in the U.S.—is inadequately assessed in the contracted study titled *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity: An Evaluation of Programs for Pupils with Limited Proficiency in English.* (1992) Instead of determining the question of value—how well are limited-English students progressing linguistically (learning English) and educationally (mastering school subjects)—the study shirks its overriding responsibility to appraise results and clearly report them.

Data collected over a 2-year period (1989-90) show generally poor results for bilingual education programs in California, but the study too easily attributes the disappointing outcomes to lack of sufficient resources without considering the possibility that it is even more likely the fault of the unsound theoretical foundation upon which bilingual education rests.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bilingual education programs were mandated under California state law in 1976 and the number of students enrolled in these programs has grown dramatically from year to year. The 1992 official California Department of Education census showed a total of 1,078,705 limited-English students in the state's schools and, based on the rate of past growth, this figure probably approaches 1,250,000 today, or nearly one in five school children. Nationally, California far outranks all other states in the number of LEP children. Almost half of all limited-English students in the country are enrolled in California schools, and they represent more than 150 different language backgrounds.

In 1988, one year after the state legislature allowed the bilingual education law to expire and refused to renew it, the legislature ordered the California Department of Education to contract for an evaluation of services provided to the state's limited-English students. Curiously, or perhaps revealingly, the Request for Proposals sent to prospective bidders for the evaluation contract called for the two-year study to be "a comprehensive assessment of bilingual education programs." (*Meeting the Challenge,* Preface, i) This statement seems to indicate that the California Department of Education was most interested in examining only "bilingual" programs, although the completed study did, in fact, review five different types of programs—three bilingual and two non-bilingual.

Because the greatest number of limited-English students are in the critical elementary grades, the study focused on those years. Only ten per cent of the funding was allocated to examination of secondary level instructional programs for LEP students.

The legislature was particularly concerned that the study provide:

1. a description of exemplary programs for LEP pupils that used distinct models widely discussed in political debates and in the research literature and

2. information to determine which model for educating LEP pupils is most effective and cost effective (*Meeting the Challenge,* 2)

It is the second objective—that of determining the most effective program model—that poses a particularly serious problem. In order to determine the effectiveness of an educational program, it is necessary to know what type of learning the program is supposed to bring about—to know, in other words, for what purpose the program was established.

The intent of the legislature in authorizing the establishment of special programs for LEP students was described for local school districts on August 26, 1987 in a series of advisories by the California Department of Education after the state Bilingual Education Act expired. The "general or intended purposes" were taken from the legislative findings and declarations of the original bilingual law, which the Department of Education cast into eight "requirements" that school districts had to meet.

Of these eight requirements, the first and most important specified that "the primary goal of all [bilingual] programs is, as effectively and efficiently as possible, to develop in each child fluency in English." (Honig, 14-15) Several of the other requirements dealt with the question of using the pupils' native or primary languages for academic instruction. None of these subsidiary requirements, however, gave to primary language instruction the pre-eminence accorded to the development of English language skills. In enacting the original Chacon Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Act in 1976, the legislators clearly intended that every limited-English child in the state must become fluent in English in order to gain access to the school curriculum on an equal footing with native speakers of English. Legislators viewed the use of different languages in teaching school subjects as a possible strategy "when necessary" (no explanation was given as to when it would be necessary) and only if the parents of the limited-English student decided to exercise the option of placing him or her in a bilingual program. (Honig, 14)

POLITICAL INFLUENCE

One would hope that the design and administration of instructional programs in the public schools would be as free as possible from political considerations. Public education should serve the best interests of the students in each local district and not the special interests of any group within the schools or in the larger community. Unfortunately, we know that the schools are not immune to political influence, and *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity* provides clear evidence that this is so.

There are several direct references in the evaluation report to political considerations. One of these references has already been mentioned but bears repeating: The desire of the legislature to have research done which addresses a variety of concerns, including "a description of exemplary programs for LEP pupils that use distinct models widely discussed in political debates..." (*Meeting the Challenge,* 2)

(emphasis added) Should political debates be used as a standard for determining the selection of instructional approaches?

In the report's acknowledgement of the assistance of persons other than the team of eight people who conducted the study, reference is made to the Advisory Committee whose advice to the team provided "valuable feedback [which] was always grounded in both the reality of schooling for LEP students and the political reality of the state." (*Meeting the Challenge,* Acknowledgements) (author's emphasis)

There is little doubt that this "political reality" was forcefully inserted into the evaluation report in large measure through the efforts of the pro-bilingual education activists on the Advisory Committee. Their contribution is implied if not fully acknowledged: "The most active members of the Advisory Committee contributed ideas, commented candidly on our analysis, and literally helped shape the direction of the study; they were truly 'participants' in this evaluation." (Acknowledgements)

Who were the activists who helped shape the direction of the study? Of the thirty-one members of the Committee, at least five have a long history of lobbying in the state for primary language (bilingual education) instruction. Two of this group are past presidents of the California Association for Bilingual Education, the chief lobbying group for bilingual education in the state; another is in the Bilingual Office of the California Department of Education, and the other two are directors of bilingual programs, one of a large city school district and the other of a county school system.

Of the remaining twenty-six Committee members, seven are employees of the State Department of Education who, therefore, are unlikely to be at odds with department policy. Eleven are state employees who were selected for their special expertise in areas such as finance or teacher credentialing rather than having knowledge about the education of language minority students.

None of the Committee members has ever taken a public position on behalf of reforming the state's programs for limited-English students or of giving more equitable support to a variety of different programs for these pupils. The deck appears to have been stacked from the beginning.

The influence of the bilingual activists was felt early on in the study with the downgrading of the question of determining the most effective instructional model. Instead of effectiveness, the description of exemplary models was given primacy: "a

major purpose of the research was to identify and examine schools which were providing exemplary programs for their language minority students." (*Meeting the Challenge,* 3) The public (and the legislature) had assumed that the evaluation would determine—at least to some extent—whether primary language instruction or English-based instruction is more often effective in helping LEP students' school performance. But this determination was completely avoided because, as the evaluation's authors commented, "the challenge of educating LEP students is much too complex to be reduced to such a simplistic formulation." (p. 3) So, rather than looking for program features that produce good learning results for students across many school districts, the evaluators focused on a small number of schools they identified as "exemplary."

At this point, the authors made another decision of major consequence. Six different instructional approaches were identified as being in practice in the state. Of the six, the so-called "submersion" model was excluded from the study because it was not considered to be a special identifiable program. According to the authors, "submersion" merely represents a situation in which the limited-English student is placed directly in a mainstream classroom where English is the language of instruction and is given no special help in overcoming the language barrier or in learning school subjects. "Submersion," in this context, is a loaded term that carries negative connotations. It signifies that the emphasis is on learning a second language, English, to the exclusion (or submersion) of the primary or home language. Yet some of the studies reported by Baker and DeKanter show that in some districts LEP students in mainstream classrooms learned English and mastered school subjects better and faster than comparable students in bilingual classrooms. (Baker, 1983)

Meeting the Challenge concedes that submersion is probably the most commonly used of the six identified approaches. This occurs in many school districts because there are too few students speaking the same language to warrant the establishment of a special bilingual program.

The decision not to track and assess the progress of LEP students placed directly in mainstream classrooms reflects a narrow, behavioristic view of second language learning held by both the evaluation team and the Advisory Committee. Instead of recognizing that the learner plays a major role in the learning of the new language, they operated on the belief that it is the program and the teachers' implementation of it that are paramount. Because submersion is more a play on words than a specially-designed instructional program, it is assumed by some to be an

educationally negative experience for LEP students to be assigned to mainstream classrooms.

But is this always the case? Over the years there has been much anecdotal reporting of the rapidity with which students learn English and school subject matter in just such situations. Currently, linguists are interested in what is called negotiation in second language acquisition: the learner "negotiates" meaning through contact with native speakers of the target language. The evaluation team recognized this in their report. "The classroom observers also took note of the extent to which LEP children and EO (English only) children were integrated in classes. We asked them to do so because the literature suggests that LEP children may benefit from living models of spoken English provided by their interactions with native English speaking students." (p. 168)

At another point, in describing various instructional practices, the team observed: "There was a deliberate effort to mix the children from different language backgrounds. This was apparently quite effective. The students were forced to interact with other children in their second language [English]." (p. 174)

INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS EVALUATED

Of the five instructional models selected for the study, three were identified as bilingual: Bilingual Late Exit, Bilingual Early Exit, and Double Immersion, also called Two-Way Bilingual (see definitions in the Glossary of Terms on page 50). In each of these models, the native language of the student is used for classroom instruction some part of the school day. The early and late exit models differ only in the number of years the student spends in the program. All three bilingual approaches teach literacy skills in the primary language first, before going on to teach reading and writing in English. Double Immersion or Two-Way programs include native speakers of English as well as LEP students, with the goal of helping both groups to learn to speak, read and write in two languages.

The other two models, English as a Second Language (ESL Pull-Out) and Sheltered English, concentrate on the early and rapid acquisition of English and do not teach in the student's native language. Of these two, ESL has a much longer history in the schools and, therefore, is better known. ESL is not an academic subject to be taught as such but rather is a cover term that refers to any number of techniques that promote the rapid learning of English for academic and social purposes. The most widely used ESL approach in practice today is still the Audiolingual

Method, since many language teachers were trained when this method was popular in the 1960s and '70s. The ALM approach employs a mechanistic use of grammar drills and rote learning, applying the principles of behavioral psychology. Many new language teaching methods have been developed under the broad title "communicative approach," with the goal of teaching language for oral and written communication in real life, academic and social situations. The most promising strategy that applies to the education of language minority students, content-based ESL—using school curriculum as the content of English language lessons—is increasingly used in ESL classrooms as teachers across the country are trained in this method. A considerable body of research shows that when content and language instruction are carefully integrated, students can successfully learn school subjects while at the same time advancing their learning of English.

Sheltered English is a version of content-based ESL most commonly used with limited-English students at the junior or senior high school level. Sheltered English classes may be titled "ESL Math," "ESL Science," or cover other subjects. What they provide is a class in a required subject designed solely for limited-English students and taught by a specially trained teacher. The evaluation report lists some of the techniques used in Sheltered English classes to help students understand the subject matter: liberal use of visual materials, cooperative learning strategies, words paired with objects, reduced English vocabulary, repetition, dramatic activities, and modeling of English. Certainly some of these techniques are not entirely new but are, in fact, methods that have been used by successful teachers in many situations and not only with second language learners.

It is important to return once more to the question of instructional variety raised earlier: If the evaluators recognized that LEP students benefit from being in situations that require them to interact as much as possible with native speakers of English, why did they exclude submersion from their evaluation, the one situation that affords these students the maximum opportunity to interact in English? While it is true that LEP students in a mainstream classroom without special help are not in a special program, it is also true that they have available to them two of the most important elements in language learning: the motivation and the opportunity to use the new language in meaningful contexts. It would have been of great practical value, in a state where such large numbers of students from so many language backgrounds are involved in an evaluation, to make comparisons between students receiving each of the special treatments and students receiving no special help.

In linguistically integrated classrooms, LEP students find the motivation and have the opportunity to interact in English with teachers and English-speaking classmates; however, in classrooms in which the native language is used for instruction most of the day, there is no motivation to use English. Even when instruction is given bilingually—alternating between English and the primary language—it has long been recognized that students favor their first language and actually "turn off" instruction given in English because they know a translation will soon follow. Moreover, the same psychological principle comes into play with productive language: if the students know that the teacher is bilingual, they will make little effort to speak English in response to his or her questions or directions. For rapid and efficient learning of a second language, it is the interaction between students in a mixed language classroom and in extracurricular activities that is essential. When students know that their teachers are not familiar with all their languages, these students are quickly motivated to learn to communicate with each other in the common language of the school, the playing fields, the library and the cafeteria.

TRANSLATION

Although the authors of this report occasionally showed some insight into the second language learning process, they soon resorted to their advocacy of primary language instruction. One example of this vacillation is the use of translation with LEP students.

The authors cite one school in which English and Spanish were used on an alternate-day plan. (p. 172) On the day on which English was to be used, one teacher would sometimes translate the lesson into Spanish to insure that the students would understand it. The authors point out that there has been much criticism in the literature of this practice and add, "The danger is that the students will learn that if they do not understand, the translation will follow. This lessens motivation to process the second language." (p. 172)

The reaction of students in avoiding the difficulty of comprehension in the second language when they understand that the message will be comfortably translated for them by someone else is well known to language teachers and others who work in bilingual situations. It appears, however, that many educators and some of the more influential members of the evaluation team ignore the problems caused by translation because they are principally concerned with promoting native language instruction to assure the maintenance of the native language rather than with the mastery of English by LEP students. In commenting about the prolonged mixing of Spanish

and English in the instruction in a fifth grade class, the authors declared: "Nonetheless, there are other possible reasons to continue the use of Spanish, including the desire to maintain the language in the students' repertory and the need for those students who were migrants to continue to use their Spanish." (p. 172)

PRELIMINARY PROCEDURES

After the selection of the instructional models to be studied, the evaluation team had to decide whether the study should concentrate on typical or exemplary programs. While they realized that the choice of exemplary programs would preclude the generalization of the study's findings, they decided, nevertheless, to study exemplary programs rather than those that were judged to be only "effective." (p. 15)

The next step was to ask nominators to name schools that met criteria set up for "well implemented" programs. (p. 16) The following criteria were applied:

1. Each site had to be nominated by a minimum of two, preferably three, people who knew but were not a part of the program.

2. Every program selected had to have characteristics that conformed to the expressed goals, methods, and key design parameters of the approach followed by the program.

3. Teachers at a chosen school had to be trained to implement this kind of program and to have the requisite skills (for example, a bilingual program without certified bilingual teachers could not qualify).

4. Student data had to be collected regularly and be available, making it possible for research to assess the program's effectiveness. (p. 16)

By means of interviews with knowledgeable individuals, starting with the California Department of Education and working down through five levels to the local schools, the team identified sites for possible study. At this point there was a pool of 52 districts and 133 schools. The pool was considered to be "geographically diverse" and contained all of the five instructional approaches previously selected. It was also diverse in the size of the schools as well as in the number of languages and their concentration. (p. 17)

By using the four criteria listed above, the pool was reduced to 21 districts and 48 schools which were considered to be well-implemented. Finally, the numbers were

further reduced to 11 districts, 15 schools, and 45 classrooms in what was called an "intensive sample." Of the 15 schools in this sample, four were Bilingual Late Exit, three Bilingual Early Exit, two Double Immersion, three ESL Pull-Out and three Sheltered English.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

For educators, legislators, and other interested persons who are seriously concerned with the progress of language minority students, a quick reading of the first paragraph of Chapter 3 is most disconcerting. The authors initiate the discussion of the assessment of LEP students by stating that Chapter 1 of the evaluation had "foreshadowed the critical message from the evidence to be discussed in this chapter." (p. 25) The crucial message was that "Comparable data are not available to assess the progress of LEP students toward the goals of English language proficiency and of academic achievement." (p. 25) This is not an isolated statement; throughout the report this message is repeated several times. As the purpose of the evaluation was precisely to determine the progress of the students toward specific goals, one is compelled to ask what value the legislature received from funding the study. If the California Department of Education had not collected achievement data on LEP students for the eighteen years that the Bilingual Education Act was in force, is it unreasonable to expect that they would collect such data for the two year duration of this evaluation? Reasonable expectation or not, this failure to report on student progress is the most glaring flaw in the California evaluation.

The language proficiency tests used by the selected schools included the Bilingual Syntax Measure, the Language Assessment Scales, the Idea Oral Language Proficiency Test, and the Bilingual Index of Natural Language, all of which are described and critiqued in the report. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, a standardized test administered in many school districts across the country, was used to measure scholastic achievement. Major causes for the lack of comparable data for the instructional models are listed as "variation, inconsistency, and limited amount of local testing; student transiency and low attendance; and low validity and unreliability of the tests." (p. 31)

While absenteeism and transiency are considered to be the most important causes, the reasons for the inconsistency of the testing are given special scrutiny and are characterized by the authors as being "more covert, often times unspoken, [and] usually not listed in any policy document." (p. 37) One of these reasons has to do with the heavy burden of work supposedly placed on the Resource Specialist teach-

ers who, besides their regular teaching assignment, are given responsibility for the testing of the LEP students. Because their time is severely limited, these teachers "sometimes choose to teach students rather than test them." (p. 37)

The authors imply that the special funding that districts receive for their LEP programs can be a factor in the desire of the teachers not to carry out testing mandates: "District funding, and to a degree, individual school funding, is partially determined by the number of LEP children being served. State funds designated Economic Impact Aid (EIA/LEP) are allocated to small and medium sized school districts according to the number of LEP students enrolled. Every limited-English child who is reclassified to non-LEP or Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) status represents a potential reduction in funding. "We have been told that some teachers who know that the student continues to need supportive instruction even though he/she is reclassified are reluctant to formally change the status of the student." (p. 37)

Although a direct charge is not made by the authors of the report that school districts, teachers, and administrators consciously refrain from testing for reclassification so that funding will not be reduced, this conclusion is strongly suggested. As a teacher and researcher in California for many years, I can state, from personal experience, that there has been much unofficial talk that testing of LEP students is avoided and that they are retained in bilingual programs beyond their needs.

Further, the authors of this study too readily impute a benign motive to teachers who are reluctant to test and reclassify their students. If teachers do not test, how can they know what supportive instruction is still needed? How do teachers know that their students will not fare better in mainstream classes in which they have the opportunity to refine their English as well as to learn fundamental subject matter?

Another cause of inconsistency in testing LEP students may be what the evaluators discerned as a reluctance of some administrators to record LEP student test scores that might lower a school's test averages. The evaluators mention that "A number of administrators that we interviewed believe that some schools report scores of LEP students separately, and that other schools simply do not test the children at all." (p. 38) Moreover, they state that while "No schools in our sample articulated a no, or limited, testing policy...privately some school personnel suggested that other schools do have such an implicit policy." (p. 38)

In summing up this section, the authors attribute the negligent student assessment practices to "the fact that overburdened school personnel find few, if any, incentives

for testing LEP children after the initial assessment for program entry has been conducted." (p. 38) They add that "it is not surprising that many students may wait years to be formally retested for program exit and that many others may never be reclassified, going on to the middle school still bearing the LEP label." (p. 38)

There are all kinds of incentives for teachers to carry out their basic duties but it would seem that honesty and the desire to fulfill one's responsibilities and to keep faith with the students should be at the top of the list. This should be especially true for those bilingual teachers who receive extra stipends of from $600 to $5,000 per year, as many in California do. (p. 96)

In a section headed "Reclassification," the declining number of students being judged "Fluent English Proficient" and, therefore, ready to exit from special bilingual programs is addressed. As this trend to retain students in bilingual education is occurring at the same time that there has been a tremendous surge in LEP enrollments, the legislature has been concerned about the impact on schools. Once again, limited time for testing due to the complexity of the program is identified as a major cause. Another reason that may be more important is explained as "the perceived importance of reclassification to the program." (p. 40) Apparently, some schools and districts view reclassification as being discretionary.

The authors consider the failure of a school to evaluate students periodically for their readiness to leave bilingual programs and enter mainstream classrooms "may be grave, limiting their options at the secondary level." (p. 42) At the same time, they warn that an early exit from the program could cause problems for these students and cite the writings of Ramirez and Cummins in support of long stays in bilingual programs, five to seven years. (Cummins, 1981; Ramirez, 1991)

After reviewing its data on reclassification, the evaluators conclude that the use of reclassification rates is not a valid measure of program effectiveness and, therefore, "some—perhaps most—current testing practices may serve neither the evaluators who seek to monitor program effectiveness nor the students in those programs." (p. 42) This is not only an indefensible but an irresponsible conclusion. Rather than recommending different assessment instruments or practices and a more rigorous application of testing mandates, the authors absolve the California educational establishment from the urgent responsibility of measuring student progress, allowing students to move on to more suitable academic placements when ready, and of making special programs accountable.

It is difficult to say whether the authors of this study, in writing the conclusions quoted above, were stating their criticism of the reclassification process in principle or simply objecting to what appear to be poorly conceived and organized testing procedures. At any rate, the report authors issue a caveat that researchers and policy makers should not use reclassification rates "as a proxy for program effectiveness when, in fact, this number may bear little relationship to the actual language skills of the students or the effectiveness of the program in teaching those skills." (p. 42) What does seem to be effective, though, is that the evaluation itself is closing the door completely on any objective comparison of student achievement in the different program models being examined, those using the native language and those emphasizing English-based instruction.

The California State Department of Education could profitably learn from the New York City school district how to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of different programs for language minority students. In October 1994 the New York City Board of Education published the results of a four-year study comparing the performance of LEP students enrolled in bilingual classrooms, where most of the instruction is provided in the native language, with LEP students enrolled in ESL programs for special help in English. The new study is the first to quantify the dramatic differences in student performance when they are given distinctively different language programs. "At all grade levels, students served in ESL-only programs exited their programs faster than those served in bilingual programs," the report said. To be more specific, "About 79 percent of students who entered ESL classes in kindergarten were able to test out within 3 years, but only 51 percent of students who entered bilingual classes in kindergarten were able to test out within three years." (*New York Times*, October 20, 1994) The dereliction in student assessment and reassignment that has been allowed to continue for twenty years in California cannot be excused for the reasons stated earlier in this essay. If New York City teachers can be held accountable for evaluating student performance and making appropriate changes in student assignments, then their California cousins could be held to these same standards.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Much of this very long and detailed report does not directly address the central question asked by the legislature: What is the most effective type of instructional program for helping LEP students to become fluent in English as the means of gaining access to an equal educational opportunity in our schools? Instead, a variety of other information is presented.

The introduction and the first three chapters of the report, which have already been discussed, deal in general with the research design for the study and, more particularly, with the two critical questions of the selection of elementary school programs and the assessment of LEP students.

The following chapters, four through ten, explore subsidiary issues that are significant in the overall plan of the study but do not speak directly to the central question. Chapter eleven presents a statistical review of LEP programs at the secondary level and Chapter twelve states the evaluation team's six major findings and conclusions.

The presentations in Chapters four through ten encompass a multitude of subjects that affect the establishment and operation of LEP instructional programs. Some of these subjects are the factors—either within or outside district control—that affect the selection and design of an LEP program, such as staff qualifications and training, program variations, the integration of LEP programs into school operations, resource allocation and implementation costs, and attendance and transiency.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A brief review of program characteristics and a description of the limited-English students enrolled at the secondary level is found in Chapter eleven. Data were gathered by telephone interviews at 27 secondary schools, by visits to five selected schools, and by consultations with local school districts, California Department of Education personnel, and a special group of advisors who are not identified in the report. A literature review is included.

Just as was the case at the elementary level, there has been spectacular growth in the enrollment of LEP students in California intermediate and high schools. In the years between 1987 and 1990, there was a 43.5% growth in the enrollment of LEP students at the secondary level, slightly higher than the 40% increase at the elementary level. Approximately one quarter of a million LEP students, almost one third of the total number of LEPs, were enrolled in grades seven through twelve.

More so even than at the elementary level, heterogeneity places a heavy burden on the establishment and operation of well functioning programs at the secondary level. Besides diversity of languages—across California there were LEPs from 96 different language groups—cultural differences and dialectal differences often exist, even within the same language or national group. Another major complicating factor in organizing classes at the secondary level for this population is the wide range of edu-

cational backgrounds (how much prior schooling they have had and whether they have any knowledge of English at all) that these students bring to their new schools.

All the secondary level programs for limited-English students that were surveyed provided English as a Second Language classes in some form and some electives, i.e., physical education, music. Beyond these, four teaching approaches were listed:

Approach A - Core academic courses taught in Sheltered English

Approach B - Use of Non-English Primary Language for teaching all academic courses (for example, the use of parallel textbooks in English and Spanish to teach math and science)

Approach C - Use of Non-English Primary Language and Sheltered English (primary language is used to teach some academic subjects, Sheltered English for others)

Approach D - Mainstream placement for all subjects

According to the authors of the evaluation, when classes were taught in the native or primary language, the language used was exclusively Spanish. No mention is made of the provision of native language courses for the speakers of 95 other languages in California's high schools.

At the secondary level and especially in high school, the question of taking and passing classes required for graduation as well as electives is of crucial importance. With LEP students, several other considerations are paramount: Should LEP students take required classes in English or in their primary language and, if in the primary language, does the school offer any or all of these classes in that language? The same question applies if students are to take these essential courses in Sheltered English: Does the school offer a sufficient number of different subjects taught by Sheltered English methods?

One important finding of this part of the study was that there were many schools that did not offer all of the classes that the students need for graduation. The evaluators divided this content coverage into three categories: Full, Partial, and Sparse. At schools with sparse coverage, for example, "one whole subject area, such as science or math, was not scheduled for LEP students, and/or entire grade levels, such as eleventh and twelfth grade classes, were not available for LEP pupils." (p. 208)

A breakdown was made of the coverage in the high schools by the four different instructional approaches. Two of the schools assigned their limited-English students to mainstream classes so that it is not possible to know if any special classes were provided for them. In the remaining eleven high schools, two had full coverage, three partial coverage, and six sparse coverage. To put it more succinctly, in only two of eleven high schools did LEP students have available to them all of the subjects that they needed for graduation.

The review of the elementary programs for limited-English students revealed that many of the schools did not reclassify their students (exit them from the bilingual program with appropriate skills to work in mainstream classrooms) for a number of the reasons previously discussed. According to reports from the secondary schools, reclassification of students at the higher grade levels is even more difficult than it is for students at the elementary level. The mastering of English writing skills appears to be the principal barrier to reclassification and, therefore, to inclusion in mainstream classes. Because of the lack of opportunities for reclassification, many students remain in LEP programs until they drop out of school.

This section of the evaluation concludes with a list of seven factors (listed below) that the authors suggest may contribute to the lack of access to core academic subjects for limited-English students:

1. the diverse and complex needs of LEP students

2. assessment procedures that provide too little information to accurately gauge the academic preparation level, range of literacy, and diverse academic needs of secondary school age LEPs

3. the poor implementation of Sheltered English

4. a critical shortage of teachers willing and trained to teach courses designed for LEP students

5. the absence of theoretical models of second language acquisition to serve as underpinning for effective and comprehensive programs for LEP students

6. difficulties in obtaining appropriate textbooks and materials

7. problems in the departmentalized structure and scheduling complexities of secondary schools that result in a lack of comprehensive planning for LEP students. (p. 209)

Most of these factors appear questionable to me as they do not directly address the problem. Number five deserves to be answered. In citing the "absence of theoretical models" as a factor in the denial to LEP students of access to many of the classes they need for graduation, the evaluators shine the spotlight on the correct target but are completely wrong in their assertion that there is an absence of models.

A close reading of this report reveals the following: the evaluators do not explicitly identify the theoretical base of the programs they selected for this study; the evaluation team and its advisors indicate through the selection process and the commentary in the report that they see native language teaching as the essential condition—the *sine qua non*—for second language acquisition. But a careful review of the professional literature indicates that there is no valid theory nor, for that matter, successful practice that supports the use of native language instruction in programs whose primary goal is to develop in LEP students fluency in English.

What much of recent linguistic theory does tell us is that students learn the second language (English) not only by exposure to a great amount of receptive language (listening and reading), but also by as much use of the productive or expressive language as possible (speaking and writing) in real life situations. It is this opportunity for LEP students to use English intensively with native speakers of English in order to negotiate meaning which is in short supply in current programs. Twenty years ago, before the onset of the bilingual education revolution, high school LEP students generally had this opportunity.

One study from the period immediately preceding bilingual education, conducted in four Los Angeles high schools, provides evidence that students who had been in special, English-based programs before they were completely mainstreamed, had access to all classes needed for graduation and were graduating in numbers proportionate to the overall graduation rate of each high school. (Rossier, 1968) Judging from the present study under review and other information that we have, the present LEP programs are not preparing LEP students for secondary school education and eventual high school graduation as well as local school districts did in the past. The current limited-English students are not only being denied the extensive English language teaching that used to be available to immigrant students, but also have more limited opportunities to interact linguistically with English speakers than did students in the past. This results, in turn, in delaying their ability to take mainstream classes in the core subjects.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The concluding chapter of Volume II of *Meeting the Challenge* consists of a listing and brief summary of each of the six major findings and conclusions of the study. These six findings are also found in Volume I, the Executive Summary, along with eight recommendations based on the findings and conclusions.

The first three conclusions summarize in broad fashion much of the material presented in the full report and reviewed in this paper:

1. California public schools face a complex challenge of educating a rapidly growing number of language minority students.

2. Schools choose different models for educating their LEP students in response to their demographic condition and resources, and then devise strategies to adapt these models to their reality.

3. Schools are developing educational and organizational innovations to address language minority issues, but they face severe resource limitations and problems in implementing their programs.

Conclusion 4, one of the more controversial conclusions, is based on data obtained by the Education Finance and Planning Group at the American Institutes for Research: The data indicated that the cost of delivering instruction in classes for LEP students was about the same as the cost for mainstream classes, and program costs beyond the classroom were highest for ESL Pull-out and Double Immersion Programs. Most funding for the cost of classes for LEP students came from district general funds; funds for supplemental services for LEP children came from a variety of sources, rather than from a single, or solid, base of support. (p. 228)

The controversy centers around conflicting views of the manner in which the schools are using funding for the LEP instructional programs and first came to light when the state's watchdog organization, The Little Hoover Commission, published its 1993 report on LEP education, *A Chance to Succeed: Providing English Learners with Supportive Education.* A dissenting view on the use of funding was best expressed by Chairman Nathan Shapell in his cover letter for the report addressed to Governor Pete Wilson and state legislative leaders. Shapell declared:

> The Department (California Department of Education), schools, academics, and other advocates all have insisted, that there is a lack of funding for English learner education. At the same time, the Department has

> adamantly denied knowing how much is spent on programs for English learners. The Commission notes that schools have almost $1 billion in state and federal funds that may be used at their discretion for at-risk, impoverished and non-English-speaking students. If all of these funds were devoted to English learners, schools would have about $1,000 extra for each child. Although these funds are meant to supplement rather than supplant base funding, a recent statewide study found that schools spend little more in English learner classrooms than they do in mainstream classes. In terms of financial accountability, therefore, the Department has failed to properly monitor the schools' use of special funding for English learners.

Although it has apparently provoked little sustained interest, Conclusion 5 points more directly at the root cause of the poor performance of the state LEP program than does any other: Most LEP students in intermediate or senior high schools may not have access to the full curriculum that would enable them to graduate.

The importance of high school graduation to our young people cannot be overemphasized. At one time, advocates of bilingual programs using the native language to teach the core high school curriculum proclaimed this as the great remedy that would enable LEP students to stay in school and graduate. Now this evaluation tells another story. These students are leaving school in large numbers because in many schools they are unable to take the core classes required for graduation.

And why are they not permitted to take these important classes? Although the report is not explicit about this, reason tells one that the delay in their English language development is at the heart of the problem. LEP students enrolled in California's elementary schools, given sufficient special English-based instruction and substantial interaction with native English-speaking teachers and students, could overcome the language barrier to an equal education long before reaching the secondary school level. But we are told that, "...many students are not reclassified from an LEP status to a fluent in English status before leaving the elementary school." (p. 230) It is not illogical to wonder if the principal reasons are those listed in the evaluation (reluctance to test students and reluctance to release students from the bilingual program) or to the basic flaws in bilingual programs *per se.*

For older LEP students arriving in U.S. schools at the secondary level, with only four to six years in which to complete their high school education, it is even more critical to provide intensive English language classes and Sheltered English classes in the core curriculum until these students can enter mainstream high school classes with the expectation that they will graduate. As much as possible, there

must be opportunities for intensive interaction between LEP students and native speakers of English, in classrooms and in school activities, to motivate LEP students to acquire English fluency, the real *sine qua non* for academic achievement and participation in the school community.

In authorizing the California Department of Education to contract for an evaluation of the state's LEP programs, the Legislature indicated two particular concerns for which it wanted answers. The first of these had to do with the description of exemplary programs and the second with identifying the instructional model for educating limited-English pupils that was most effective and cost effective.

Of the two concerns, that of effectiveness had earlier been specified in the Bilingual Bicultural Act of 1976 to be the primary goal of these programs: "as effectively and efficiently as possible to develop in each child fluency in English." The evaluation team and its advisors completely evaded the request by the legislature for an objective judgment in this urgent matter, choosing instead to focus entirely on the one concern for identifying exemplary programs.

Conclusion 6 asserts: "California public schools do not have valid and ongoing assessments of the performance for students with limited proficiency in English. Therefore, the state and the public cannot hold schools accountable for LEP students achieving high levels of performance." (emphasis added) If the schools are not to be held accountable, who is to accept responsibility for the dismal performance of so many LEP students who spend year after year in segregated native language classes in which they are unable to develop the English fluency to leave this program and join their classmates in the mainstream? Or should the responsibility for such poor results be attributed to the California Department of Education which has worked uncompromisingly over the years to force primary language programs on the schools and which originally promoted the language proficiency tests whose validity is now being questioned?

Conclusion 6 poses an even more important question. If the tests used to assess LEP performance, either of English language proficiency or of achievement in subject matter, are so low in validity, does this mean that no realistic assessment is possible? The explanatory text for this conclusion seems to suggest that this is the case but, of course, this is unacceptable. Young people of limited-English proficiency have the same right as their native English-speaking schoolmates to have their linguistic and academic performance evaluated periodically by measures which clearly

indicate to them and to the schools the extent of their progress toward the goals set for all students.

One possible solution to the problem of assessment, especially that of English language proficiency, would be to return to the use of teacher judgment. In several instances, the evaluation report cites schools in which this is being done successfully. Generally this type of assessment is most effective when a team of teachers rates each student on a prepared scale. The literature indicates that this kind of assessment has relatively high validity. (Baker and Rossell, 1987) Alternative assessment practices these days emphasize the collection of student work in a portfolio over a period of time to chart progress through writing samples, readings, etc., rather than relying on a single test score. But a standardized test score, such the CTBS mentioned earlier in this report, is one important element of the assessment.

CONCLUSION

At the outset, I defined an educational evaluation as a report that should answer the question of how well the program or treatment is meeting the goal set for it. In my judgment, *Meeting the Challenge* has not even minimally met this goal. Running through the report is the theme that it is really not possible to measure program effectiveness because valid assessment instruments are not available. Accordingly, no data are presented that would give one the slightest idea of what progress LEP students are making in learning English, let alone how effective each program model is.

The evaluation is an impressive achievement in scope—five volumes containing almost 900 pages of text, lists, graphs, and charts. It provides much valuable information for those lay people, including legislators and policy makers, who might otherwise not comprehend the magnitude and complexity of the problem occasioned by the enrollment in the California schools of more than a million students with limited proficiency in English. But the report's authors regard as a "simplistic formulation" the most important question of the evaluation: Which type of instruction is more effective in helping LEP students to learn English and school subjects, primary language instruction (bilingual education) or English-based instruction, and which approach is more cost effective?

While the report presents no statistical data that would shed light on the effectiveness of current programs, it does provide several items of information that, read carefully, point to the conclusion that California's heavy reliance on native language

teaching has not served LEP students well. The conclusion could be formed that the bilingual programs described as exemplary have instead resulted in delaying the learning of English, delaying the enrollment of LEP students in mainstream classes, and, in many cases, denying these students the opportunity to enroll in classes required for high school graduation. Not having access to classes available to their English-speaking classmates, LEP students are, in effect, denied an important civil right: the right to equal educational opportunity.

Was there really no way of evaluating the California LEP program in terms of the goal of developing English language fluency set down for it by the legislature? Or is this an excuse made by advocates for continuing bilingual education programs, many of them influential in the writing of this evaluation? I am firmly convinced that this excuse is used as a means of covering up the sad record of bilingual education programs promoted by the State of California.

Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity will never be accomplished as long as the powerful bilingual education lobby in California refuses to permit bilingual education programs to be fairly compared with English-based programs in which LEP students are integrated with native speakers of English. Hundreds of thousands of young immigrant students deserve to have a realistic opportunity to learn English and school subjects that will allow them to progress toward high school graduation and on to higher education and to meaningful employment. *Meeting the Challenge* has shown—as much by what it has avoided saying as by what it has said—that this opportunity will continue to be withheld from them until we are able to look truthfully at the havoc that the programs of the past twenty years have caused.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bilingual Education: *Teaching limited-English students their school subjects in the native language while they are learning English.*

Maintenance Bilingual Education (Late-Exit TBE) - *A program of bilingual teaching lasting 5-7 years to develop full literacy in two languages.*

Transitional Bilingual Education (Early-Exit TBE) - *A short term bilingual program (about 3 years) aiming for quick mastery of English and temporary use of the native language for instruction in the school subjects.*

Two-Way Bilingual Programs (Double Immersion) - *Teaching two groups of students, each fluent in one language (i.e., English speakers and Spanish speakers), to become fluent and literate in each other's language.*

Degree of English Proficiency:

Fluent-English Proficient (FEP) - *A student whose English-language ability is adequate for regular schoolwork in English.*

Non-English Proficient (NEP) - *A U.S. resident with no knowledge of English, usually a newly-arrived immigrant.*

Limited-English Proficient (LEP) - *The official term for any student in a U.S. school who does not know English sufficiently well to do regular classroom work in English.*

English Language Teaching Programs:

Communicative Approach - *The broad term applied to a variety of second language teaching methods which emphasize the functional and interactional aspects of the language to be learned, i.e., the ability to use the language rather than just learning grammatical usage.*

English as a Second Language (ESL) - *The teaching of English language intensively for both social and academic purposes.*

ESL Pull-Out - *Removing LEP students from their regular classroom for English language lessons.*

Language Immersion Programs - *A technique whereby children are taught in a second (unknown) language from the first day of school, with the goal of developing mastery of the second language for subject matter learning and literacy.*

Language Minority - *A U.S. resident whose home language is not English (but who may or may not know English well).*

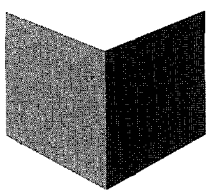
Primary language, native language, home language or mother tongue - *Terms used interchangeably to mean the first language learned in infancy.*

Reclassification - *Determining when LEP students are ready to exit from special programs and work entirely in the mainstream.*

Submersion - *Assigning LEP students to mainstream classrooms where all instruction is in English and providing them no special help, as was the case for earlier generations of immigrants.*

Target Language - *The language intended to be learned.*

Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority students: Findings From a Naturalistic Research Study



Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority students: Findings From a Naturalistic Research Study

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The purpose of this article is to share the findings of an important study that empirically examines and articulates the components of effective classroom practice for limited-English-proficient second-language learners. *A Descriptive Study of Significant Features of Exemplary Special Alternative Instructional Programs* is a research report of a study by Tikunoff, Ward, van Broekhuizen, Romero, Castaneda, Lucas, and Katz (1991) conducted for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages (OBEMLA). Nine years ago, Gersten and Woodward (1985) noted that the education of language minority students is "relatively easy to write about, yet difficult to implement sensitively on a day to day basis" (p. 78). Tikunoff et al. attempted to accomplish this goal–to explain the day-to-day realities of effective instructional practice.

The report by Tikunoff et al. (1991) presents the findings of a three-year study designed to identify and describe effective practices of exemplary special alternative instructional programs for teaching limited-English proficient students from elementary and secondary schools. The report is a descriptive study of nine of these exemplary special alternative instructional programs (SAIPs). The purpose of the study was to describe features of the SAIPs that appeared to contribute to positive outcomes for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Until recently the major topic of both debate and research in the area of bilingual education has been the language of instruction (Crawford, 1989; Moll, 1992). As Moll noted, the over-reliance, almost obsession, with the topic does a disservice to

language minority students, in that little of the research and discussion has focused on the components of quality instruction and quality learning environments.

Goldenberg, another eminent researcher and scholar in the field, makes a similar point (personal communication, October 8, 1994):

> (The) language of instruction debate has so dominated discussion of how best to serve the needs of language minority children that other issues which are at least equally important, have not been adequately addressed. For example, what are optimal instructional strategies for language minority students who are at risk; ..How do we promote English language development; ..is there an optimal balance between direct teaching strategies on the one hand and "authentic" communicatively-based classroom interaction on the other?

In other words, Goldenberg, too, sees the need for research on defining effective instructional practice.

> Increasing numbers of teachers face the daunting task of simultaneously building literacy and developing written expression ability, while enhancing English language growth. These teachers often encounter many students with minimal or disrupted educational experiences in the countries from which they came, who read well in neither their native language (be it Spanish, Lao or Vietnamese) nor English (Gold, 1992). The complexity of this challenge can cause anxiety for even seasoned and accomplished teachers (Fillmore, 1982; Ramirez, 1992; Saville-Troike, 1984). Clearly, there is an urgent need for understanding critical features of effective instruction for teaching students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The past decade has seen an increasing use of programs for second language learners that stress the development of English language abilities through the use of academic instruction (Anderson & Roit, in press; Barrera, 1984; Chamot & O'Malley, 1989, 1994; Gersten & Woodward, in press; Northcut & Watson, 1986). When researchers have integrated English language instruction with content-area instruction in subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, results have been promising (Anderson & Roit, in press; Chamot & O'Malley, 1989; Goldenberg, 1992/1993). These programs go by a variety of names – sheltered English, content-based English as a second language (ESL) instruction, structured immersion, cognitive-academic language learning. In each case, for the majority of the academic day, students are taught in English. In some cases, part of the day is spent in native language instruction provided by either a teacher or a

paraprofessional proficient in the students' native language. In other cases, the entire school day is in English.

There are several reasons for the increasing use of this approach for teaching the burgeoning numbers of second language learners in American schools. The first is the multitude of languages represented in many communities. It is becoming more and more common for as many as 5 to 10 different languages to be represented in one school or one classroom. The provision of native language instruction is simply not feasible in these cases. In addition, appropriate bilingual teachers are not always available, and, as others have noted, the number of bilingual teachers is not adequate to meet the increasing numbers of language minority students (de la Rosa, Maw, & Yzaguirre, 1990).

A second factor responsible for increases in approaches that stress the development of English abilities through academic instruction is a growing discontent with the model of transitional bilingual education that was commonly advocated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The naturalistic research of Ramirez (1992) found that often the "transition" from virtually all native language instruction to virtually all English instruction was rarely smooth for either students or teachers. In cases where the transition was especially abrupt, students often experienced major difficulties.

Researchers such as Barrera (1984) and Saville-Troike (1982) have consistently stressed that the key problem and issue is not the determination of the exact age or grade level at which to introduce English language academic instruction, but rather, how to merge English language acquisition with academic learning in a fashion that is both stimulating and not overly frustrating to students. As early as 1984, Barrera noted how English language reading can be an excellent medium for the development of English language competence:

> the beginning of second-language reading can be a natural . . . learner-controlled occurrence when children approach reading as a desirable, useful, and meaningful activity... as long as the learner is making sense of the written language he or she encounters (p. 170).

Parental preference is a third reason for the increased merging of content-area instruction with English language instruction, as indicated by preliminary findings from a study of families of Mexican heritage in a California suburban community (Pease-Alvarez, 1993). Pease-Alvarez surveyed 233 Mexican-descendent parents, interviewed 64 students in these families (as well as other family members), and collected standardized measures of the students' English and Spanish vocabulary.

These families ranged from those in which two parents and the child were born in Mexico (N=20) to those in which the child and one of the parents were born in this country (N=4). Although parents appreciated the use of Spanish in kindergarten and the use of Spanish to help explain school policies and procedures, they wanted their children to learn English more quickly than they were learning it in the transitional bilingual education program.

At the same time, Pease-Alvarez is careful to note that maintenance of the students' native language was invariably important to these parents, and that parents and children were enraged when the use of Spanish or Mexican culture was denigrated. Other research conducted by Pease-Alvarez and Hakuta (1992, cited in Phillips and Crowell, 1994) found that:

> Retention of Spanish among kindergarten-age children is not disrupted when English is introduced at school, in part because the children...are immersed in Spanish at home and in their community...[T]hese children are adept at figuring out when to use one language rather than the other and at making appropriate adjustments when talking with parents, with various sets of peers, or with teachers (p. 20).

More rapid English language learning through the use of literature and mathematics instruction appears to be preferred by many of parents. The challenge is accomplishing this goal in such a way that students are not unduly frustrated.

AN EXAMINATION OF EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

The study by Tikunoff et al. (1991) utilized methodology similar to classic research studies by Tikunoff (1985) and Fisher and Guthrie (1983) which used observational techniques to define parameters of bilingual instruction. Their research was groundbreaking in that they did not try to assess whether bilingual education "worked" but rather tried to understand why certain programs worked, and to delineate common instructional features of effective programs. Their purpose was to begin to develop a knowledge base on how to teach second language students effectively.

Tikunoff et al.'s (1991) study had a similar purpose: to further define how to teach second language students well. One of its primary goals was to develop a deeper understanding of those techniques and strategies that effective teachers use while merging content area instruction with English language instruction. In a recent, comprehensive review of bilingual research, Cziko (1992) noted that large-scale evaluations of bilingual education models will yield results of only limited interest. Even

within a given model (e. g. transitional bilingual education, structured immersion), one is likely to find diverse instructional practices, especially in evaluations that encompass several school districts (Lam, 1992). Thus, rather than attempt large-scale evaluations, research is shifting instead toward attempting to describe features of effective practice for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students that cut across models or approaches. Studies such as Tikunoff et al.'s can shed some light on designing instruction to meet these students' educational needs.

Our article discusses the major findings of Tikunoff et al. (1991) in the context of contemporary research on second language acquisition and suggests implications for the field. A secondary purpose is to delineate how some of these critical instructional practices actually translate to the classroom. We believe such descriptions of practice are important for assisting classroom teachers to experiment with and adopt potentially effective practices.

We begin with an overview of Tikunoff et al.'s study, along with their key findings. Examples of observed instructional practices from their study are presented and then linked to the research base.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY AND METHODS

During the 1970s, school districts were encouraged to develop bilingual education programs that delivered instruction in both English and the child's native language during the primary grades. For a variety of reasons, including the increasing number of languages of language minority students, along with the massive surge of immigration from countries other than Mexico, some districts began to explore other options. In 1984, when Congress reauthorized the Bilingual Education Act, two innovations were added to the legislation:

1. A new emphasis was placed on students' achievement of academic goals meeting grade-promotion and graduation standards as well as on development of English-language proficiency; and

2. A new category of programs was funded at the federal level, called "special alternative instructional programs" (SAIPs), which were to include additional approaches to instruction of language minority students. The number of SAIPs funded by the U.S. Department of Education through Title VII grew from 62 projects in 1989, to 201 projects by 1992 (Tikunoff et al., 1991).

The specific mission of the SAIP was to provide an alternative to transitional bilingual education, which was prevalent in the 1970s and early 1980s. SAIPs were to provide instruction primarily in English, although a child's native language could be used for clarification. This approach had a particular salience for schools where several minority languages were represented among the student population, or where teachers fluent in languages spoken by students were not available.

Selection of Exemplary Program Sites

Nine SAIPs were chosen from 70 programs that were identified as exemplary by a group of 147 educators involved in various aspects of education for language minority students (Lucas & Katz, 1994). To be considered, applicants had to describe their programs and provide evidence of exceptional student performance across at least two successive years as indicated through some combination of: (a) relative gains in English-language proficiency; (b) relative gains in academic performance; (c) time required before students were mainstreamed; and (d) extent to which grade promotion requirements were met. A panel of five experts reviewed application materials from 39 programs and recommended a final slate of applicants for further review and consideration. Seventeen of these top-rated programs were visited to verify information contained in their applications. Final selection was based on information obtained from all these sources.

Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the nine exemplary special alternative instructional program sites over a period of three years. Data collection consisted of site-specific contextual information, and observational data focusing on the instructional environment, teachers' instructional practices, and students' performance of academic tasks. For observational data, up to five classes were selected from each of the nine special alternative instructional programs, and researchers spent a minimum of five days at each site, devoting one full day of observations to each classroom. In addition, teachers were interviewed before and after each observation to gather additional information regarding particular classroom events, decisions made, and strategies used.

Brief descriptions of each of these contextual and observational data sources follows.

Site-Level Contextual Information

Contextual information collected on-site included data such as student demographics, organizational relationship of the special alternative instructional programs to the district, other district-specific variables, funding sources, community relations, personnel configurations, and staff development strategies. Data on these and other variables was obtained beginning with the site selection process, and was

organized into Site Description Protocols which were updated following each visit. Program coordinators from each special alternative instructional program were provided opportunities to review their site description protocols, clarifying information or updating them with the most recent demographic data.

Tables 1 and 2 present key data on site characteristics and student populations. The selected exemplary special alternative instructional programs were located in six states (California, Oregon, Texas, Florida, New York, and Massachusetts). Eighty-seven percent of the classrooms from these programs served a multilingual population, and 13% of the classrooms were bilingual (all students spoke the same non-English language) (Lucas & Katz, 1994). The number of different languages spoken across the program sites ranged between 5 and 32, with a median of 19. All but one of the SAIPs served a student population primarily from low SES backgrounds. All but one were in primarily metropolitan or urban settings, with the number of language minority students served ranging from 100 to 1000. The one program located in a rural setting served fewer than 100 students.

Table 1
Exemplary Program Site Demographic Characteristics[1]

Site	Grade levels served	Reg'l desig.	No. students in sch. dist.	% LEP students in sch. dist.	No. schools in SAIP	No. LEPs in SAIP	SES of SAIP students	No. minority langs. in SAIF
Amherst, MA	7-12	Metro	1,700	5.8	1 HS	109	Low-med.	14
Culver City, CA	K-8	Metro	4,500	24	4 K-5 1 MS 1 K-8 pvt.	425	Low	30
Davie, FL	6-8	Metro	<100,000	3	1 MS	310	Low	31
Fort Worth, TX	7-12	Urban	67,500	13	5 MS 3 HS	700	Low	<5
Hillsboro, OR	8-9	Rural	5,477	3.1	2 JHS	31	Low	6
Houston, TX	6-12	Metro	25,000	16	6 JHS 4 HS	1020	Low	17
New York, NY	9-12	Urban	<100,000	37	1 HS	400	Low	32
Rochester, NY	1-6	Urban	27,500	8	6 EL	447	Low	20

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

Table 2
Characteristics of Students Served by the Exemplary SAIPs[1]

LEP STUDENT CHARACTERISTS														
	INCIDENCES OF NATIVE LANGUAGES												NATURE OF IMMIGRATION	
	Span	**Viet**	**Khmer**	**Laot**	**Chin Lngs**	**Jpns**	**Kor**	**Arm**	**Filip**	**Haiti Creole**	**East Europe**	**Middle East**	**Recent Arriv**	**U.S. Res.**
Amherst, MA	Hi	Low	Hi		Low	Low							x	
Culver City, CA	Hi	Low			Low	Low	Low		Low		Low	Low	x	
Davie, FL	Hi	Low			Low		Low			Hi	Low	Low	x	
Fort Worth, TX	Hi	Low	Med	Med									x	x
Glendale, CA	Hi	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Med	Hi	Low				x	x
Hillsboro, OR	Hi	Low	Low	Low	Low				Low					x
Houston, TX	Hi	Med		Low	Low	Low	Low						x	
New York, NY	Hi				Hi		Hi				Hi		x	
Rochester, NY	Hi	Low	Low	Low	Low				Low				x	x

[1]From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

Description of Instructional Practice Profile

To determine what effective instructional practices were used by teachers at exemplary special alternative instructional programs, observers used the Description of Instructional Practice Profile to assess teachers' use of 33 instructional practices that prior research has shown to be characteristic of effective instruction generally (Brophy & Good, 1986), as well as practices that are advocated for use with second language learners (Chamot & O'Malley, 1989; Tikunoff, 1985) specifically for instruction of language minority students. The Description of Instructional Practice Profile observation system is a moderate inference instrument that the observers completed immediately following each observation session. Items for the Description of Instructional Practice Profile are presented as part of the results contained in Table 3.

Instructional Environment Profile and Student Functional Proficiency Measure.

Additional information about the instructional environment (how instruction was organized and delivered), and about how students responded to inherent task and activity demands was obtained concurrently by two observers. One observer coded Instructional Environment Profile information, while the other coded Student Functional Proficiency information.

The Instructional Environment Profile observations focused on class size, class composition, lesson content, number and size of groups, criteria for assignment to groups, academic task requirements, and nature of student evaluation. The Instructional Environment Profile coding sheet was filled in at two-minute intervals. Observations were distributed as follows: 39% on English as a Second Language instruction, and 61% on content-area instruction integrated with English language development.

The Student Functional Proficiency measure describes how well language minority students perform academic tasks while acquiring English proficiency (Tikunoff, 1987). Student Functional Proficiency observations focused on three areas of student performance: engagement in academic tasks, use of skills required for successful task completion, and types of instructional tasks assigned. These data were coded based on observations of groups of four students. One student per group was observed, and the coding sheet was filled out in 30-second intervals before moving on to the next student. Each student in the group was observed five times before moving on to another group of four students.

The goal was to look at student engagement, language(s) used by students, and peer interactions.

RESULTS

Administrative, Programmatic and Instructional Features Characteristic of Exemplary Special Alternative Instructional Programs

In the report issued by Tikunoff et al., significant characteristics of the exemplary programs are presented in three overarching categories:

- administrative features
- programmatic features
- instructional features

Because administrative and programmatic features were fairly straightforward in their meaning and interpretation, they will be reviewed briefly. On the other hand, instructional features will be discussed more thoroughly, with an emphasis on key findings and their relation to the extant literature on bilingual education. At several times, examples from our current ongoing research are added to provide the reader with a concrete sense of the instructional strategies. Note that although each category of exemplary features is presented separately, Tikunoff et al. caution that "significant features operated in an interactive fashion and manifested concurrently at exemplary special alternative instructional programs. As a result, it would be difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, to separate them and attempt to implement them independently" (p. 36). In other words, no one instructional variable was the key to success; rather it was a thoughtful combination of administrative support and effective instructional strategies that contributed to the overall success of these programs.

Administrative Features

Overall, exemplary special alternative instructional programs exhibited two significant administrative-level features. The first of these was contextual features, including:

- presence of an individual who assumed an instructional leadership role (e.g., planning, coordinating, administering);
- availability of expert teachers; and
- a history of intensive staff development provided for all teachers, not just teachers responsible for language minority students.

Some exemplary sites, specifically those with a history of providing transitional bilingual education programs, drew from an available cadre of trained, experienced teachers. When the decision to establish a special alternative instructional program was made, these expert teachers were invited to participate in its development and design, and subsequently, to teach in the program. Other sites placed heavy emphasis on attracting teachers known for their content-area effectiveness. Still others solicited both effective content-area teachers and those who had worked effectively with language minority students.

The second area of exemplary administrative-level features involved a willingness to reallocate scarce administrative resources, particularly in order to accomplish the following:

- providing professional development and recruiting of effective content-area ESL teachers;

- providing education extension experiences for students beyond the regular school hours such as tutors, summer school programs;

- identifying external funds (e.g., ESEA Title VII, Chapter 1-Migrant funds) to combine with district funds for program support.

The extension of English-language development into general education classes was often a result of extensive professional development provided to faculty at exemplary special alternative instructional program sites, particularly with respect to developing instructional strategies to meet language minority students' needs. In addition, instructional leadership was directed toward coordination of school staff efforts to tailor services for language minority students. Implementation of an exemplary special alternative instructional program concomitantly increased teacher collaboration, staff participation in curriculum development, and professional development activities, especially those pertaining specifically to instructing language minority students. Involvement of mainstream teachers in these activities favorably affected instruction of language minority students in the entire school.

Based on a recognition that English-language acquisition is "a whole-life experience requiring considerable time and effort" (p. 12), the programs utilized community and extension experiences to assist language minority students by giving them opportunities to participate in a range of educational experiences. These programs also utilized community resources. For example, one program utilized community volunteers or

school funding sources to offer tutoring during and after school hours; some offered special summer programs and other extracurricular activities to build English language opportunities; and one incorporated work-experience internships in the community. These extracurricular activities can be excellent supportive venues for language minority students to interact with native-English speaking peers.

Programmatic Features

Regarding significant programmatic features, Tikunoff et al. emphasize that exemplary special alternative instructional programs tended to be well-integrated into the larger school context. Availability of instruction adapted to meet the needs of language minority students permeated the schools in which special alternative instructional programs were located, whether the entire school in essence constituted a special alternative instructional program, as was the case for three of the nine sites, or whether the special alternative instructional program was more akin to a program addition within a school, as in the remaining six sites. They note that, "in the daily learning experience for a language minority student, it was not clear where an exemplary program ended, and where 'regular' school began" (p.14). The authors also noted:

> Sometimes this was by design, as was the case at one site where a whole school was organized as an exemplary special alternative instructional program. Other times it was a result of the school culture, as if by negotiated agreement a faculty offered diversified educational programs designed specifically to address students' varying needs and integrated these programs, including the exemplary special alternative instructional program, into a whole-school, coordinated effort (p.13).

Whether a district had a long history of serving English-language learners or was just recently being confronted with increasing numbers of language minority students did not seem to predict the effect that the existence of the exemplary special alternative instructional program had on the larger school environment.

PATTERNS OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

In the remainder of this section, we describe instructional practices identified by Tikunoff et al. across exemplary programs, and explore linkages to the recent research literature.

Factor Analysis of the Description of Instructional Practices. A factor analysis was performed on the Description of Instructional Practice in an effort to identify underlying patterns of effective instruction based on the 33 individual teaching practices that constituted the Description of Instructional Practice observational system items. The advantage of the factor analytic approach is that it allows a research team to explore and better understand interrelationships among variables that point to larger constructs or concepts that characterize effective practice.

Overview of Technical Aspects of Factor Analysis. The factor analysis resulted in the extraction of nine factors with Eigen-values of 1.0 or greater, a common criteria for evaluating the utility and statistical soundness of factors. Of these nine, however, only four met an additional criteria set by the original researchers, that each factor include a minimum of three variables loading at .50 or higher. Although Factor 4 met the technical criteria set by Tikunoff et al., the item "Teacher paces instruction briskly" also met the criteria for Factor 1, where conceptually, it seemed to fit more appropriately. The remaining two items, "Teacher presents a learning environment that is both business-like and convivial" and "Teacher focuses on English language development as an integral part of the lesson," do not exhibit any particular conceptual coherence between them. Thus, we excluded Factor 4 from our report but discuss each item in isolation.

The three remaining factors contain critical information related to patterns of effective instructional practice.

- Factor 1. Teachers' facilitation of LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning
- Factor 2. Teacher-structured activities that promoted active use of language
- Factor 3. Use of native language(s) for English language development and concept development

These three key factors utilized 23 of the 33 observational items, and are listed in Table 3 below. Table 3 also lists the percentages of teachers in the exemplary programs who were observed using each practice. The label applied to each factor reflects the best judgment of the original research team as to the nature of the construct represented by the set of items forming a given factor. Item 1 in each factor is the item with the highest loading; remaining items are listed in descending order.

Table 3
Three Major Instructional Practice Factors: Percent of Variance Explained, Item Loadings, and Mean Percent Teachers (N=46) Using Each Practice[1]

	Mean % of Teachers
Factor 1. Facilitating LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning (31% of total variance explained)	
1. Teacher monitors students' progress toward completing instructional tasks.	97.8
2. Teacher adjusts instruction to maximize students' accuracy rates.	97.8
3. Teacher adjusts own use of English to make content comprehensible.	95.6
4. Teacher provides immediate academic feedback individually to students.	95.6
5. Teacher allows students appropriate wait time for responding to questions in English.	97.8
6. Teacher perceives that students are capable of learning.	97.8
7. Teacher structures opportunities for students to use English.	97.8
8. Teacher places a clear focus on academic goals.	95.6
9. Teacher spends most of instructional period on subject matter instruction.	97.8
10. Teacher checks students' comprehension during instruction.	93.4
11. Teacher paces instruction briskly.	93.4
12. Teacher expresses high expectations for student achievement.	93.4
13. Teacher uses materials that maximize students' accuracy rates.	95.6
14. Teacher manages classroom well.	93.4
Factor 2. Structuring activities that promote LEP students' active use of language (9%)	
1. Teacher assigns students to collaborate/cooperate on instructional tasks.	47.8
2. Teacher allows students to interact with others to work on assigned tasks.	82.6
3. Student talk dominates lesson.	30.4
4. Teacher does not correct the ungrammatical utterances of students.	89.2
Factor 3. Using LEP students' native languages for English language and concept development (8%)	
1. Teacher uses the students' native languages for concept development/ clarification.	26.0
2. Teacher uses students' native language in order to develop competence in English.	23.9
3. Teacher allows students to use their native language to respond to questions asked in English.	54.3

[1]Adopted from Tinunoff et al. (19910.

Factor 1: Teachers' facilitation of LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning.

Of the 14 DIP Profile instructional practices that clustered for this factor, 11 have been identified in the literature on general effective instruction (e.g., monitoring of student progress, adjusting instruction to increase students' success rates, provision of immediate feedback, clear focus on academic goals, reasonably high cognitive expectations, etc.).

However, four teaching practices were related specifically to modifications of instruction for second language students:

- adjusting and modifying teachers' use of English to make content more comprehensible;
- allowing for sufficient wait time to respond in English;
- checking for comprehension during instruction; and
- structuring opportunities for students to use English.

In the example below from our own research (Gersten & Jiménez, 1994), the reader will see how one exemplary teacher named Donna merged or adapted these principles of effective teaching to ensure comprehension with her language minority students. Donna taught a 3rd grade class with students who spoke at least 7 different languages (including Spanish, Vietnamese, and Cambodian). Donna, herself, spoke only English.

> Donna began by reading the story, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema, to the class in the form of a big book. She spoke to the students in a clearer, less hurried pace than she would use in normal conversation. She also intentionally avoided synonyms and used a consistent vocabulary. Both of these strategies seemed to really increase students' levels of involvement in the lesson (as judged by eye contact maintained), and, most importantly, their comprehension.
>
> After reading two or three pages of the story, she paused to check on their understanding: Donna: What does the bow do?
>
> Student: Shoots arrow...

[Note that the question is intentionally literal, so that she could assess whether students understood a crucial vocabulary word, bow. Since the protagonist of the story is portrayed as a hero who causes rain to fall by shooting a feather from his bow into a cloud, it made sense that some children might benefit from hearing an explanation of this key word.]

A second question called for a moderate inference. It elicited a correct but truncated answer from a student:

Donna: What does he hope will happen when he shoots the arrow?

Student: The rain. (He motions rain falling.)

Donna: Right, the rain will fall down.

This student understood both the intent of the story and the question posed by his teacher but was unable (or was afraid to) fully express his thoughts in English. Donna extended and elaborated on the child's utterance. Her action had the dual effect of affirming the student's response and modeling a more complete English sentence structure for the others.

As Donna read the story she seized opportunities to teach vocabulary or to engage the children in relevant ways.

Donna: How many of you girls have earrings with holes in your ears? What are they called? Pierced, pierced means you have a hole in it. If I take a piece of paper and cut it with scissors, it's pierced.

Donna cut a little hole in a piece of paper. She asked, "What's that word? Pierce." She came back to this word later during this activity and repeated it. She also helped students relate what they knew to new situations and concepts. For example, she stressed the new word, drought, by drawing students' attention to the then current weather pattern afflicting the Southwest, because this low frequency word was crucial for understanding the plot and it was certain to be a word these students would hear and read about.

Factor 2: Teachers structured activities that promoted active use of language (including peer interaction).

Generally, teachers utilized structural arrangements that would facilitate student interactions (e.g., place students in proximity to each other and set up activities that required them to interact linguistically to complete tasks). Observations utilizing

the Instructional Environment Profile indicated that these teachers structured learning environments that promoted students' active uses of English.

Tikunoff et al. (1991) note: "Structural arrangements that place students in proximity to each other and demand that they interact linguistically to complete tasks promote language use" (p. 18). Students clearly benefit from opportunities for frequent, meaningful interactions among themselves as well as with the teacher. Along with this ample opportunity for students to respond verbally in class discussions, teachers tended to focus on the content of student oral responses, rather than grammatical correctness during content-area instruction.

One structural arrangement that has often been described in the literature as especially effective for fostering interaction among limited English proficient students is use of cooperative learning groups. Below is an example from our collaborative research (Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera, in press) of how one fourth grade teacher structures effective learning groups with a class of Latino students.

> We often observed students working together in Sonia's classroom. Sonia's views concerning collaborative efforts parallel those common in many Latino homes. Children are frequently given much responsibility for their younger siblings. Her use of cooperative learning as an instructional tool was consistent with her own cultural background and that of her students. Sonia told us what cooperative learning meant to her:
>
> I establish...cooperative groups, but I switch the students around each quarter. Before they can share with the rest of the class they need to bounce their ideas [in English] off of one another. They need someone they can trust [as they take risks in a new language].

Another way in which expert teachers of limited English proficient students continually create opportunities for students to express their own ideas in English is by providing engaging content to create a desire to communicate ideas. Many early English as a Second Language (ESL) programs were criticized for stressing grammar and usage in a decontextualized fashion (McLaughlin, 1985).

Over the past 10 years, however, ESL theorists and researchers have encouraged more natural, conversational instructional methods (Goldenberg, 1992/1993; McLaughlin, 1985). Proponents argue that ESL instruction has moved away from the rather sterile emphasis on grammar and syntax that marked earlier programs,

toward an approach where learning English is integrally linked with understanding and talking about content area subjects. Implementation, however, has been erratic.

An example appears below that demonstrates how teachers can promote active use of English in an engaging context (Gersten, 1994). The following is an observation of a fourth grade class of Latino students.

> Students are sitting on the floor and the teacher begins to read a relatively brief book, an Australian story about a woman losing her memory, *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge.* The readability of the book is well below the fourth grade level, but the emotional and thematic content is complex and subtle. Children listen with rapt attention.
>
> Ms. Tapia asks students to predict what the story will be about. Even the more reticent students volunteer their predictions. All are recorded on the flip chart. Ms. Tapia provides prompts to students who seem to be floundering, such as, "With a title like this and this picture on the cover, Fernando, what do you think this story will be about?"
>
> At the conclusion of this brief story, a discussion of mood ensues. Tapia asks, "What did you think about it?" One student answers, "It was kind of sad." Tapia responds, "How do you know?"
>
> Miguel, one of the students she has earlier described as a student with learning difficulties, says "Because old people." Since the idea is on the right track, even though the English grammar is incomplete, the response is evaluated for content rather than the extent that it conformed to correct language use.
>
> Responses are never labeled right or wrong, but sometimes students are asked to explain the rationale for their answers or opinions. Jorge, for example, explains that he "liked it because it was sad and it was happy," and proceeds to provide several examples of sad and happy instances.

Tikunoff et al.'s (1991) results suggest that collaborative/cooperative learning and more structured teacher-directed learning seem to supply an ideal basis for promoting meaningful use of the second language, encouraging risk-taking and providing many, many models of proficient performance.

Factor 3. Teachers allowed use of native language(s) for English language development and concept development.

Teachers in exemplary programs allowed students to respond to questions or class discussions in their native languages if they understood what was being asked in English, but couldn't yet respond in English. This did not necessarily mean, however, that teachers were fluent in the students' languages. Instead, teachers turned to others (e.g. aides, other children) who understood the native language being used, and from these interactions began to develop the English behind the concept. Teachers were observed to use English during 90% of the observations, and students used native languages to some degree during 36% of the observations. Table 4 presents the actual observed data on language use by both teachers and students.

Table 4
Percent of Time Teachers and Students in Exemplary Programs Used English and Non-English Languages[1]

	TEACHERS				STUDENTS			
Use of Language	**All Grade Levels**	**Elem**	**Middle JH**	**HS**	**All Grade Levels**	**Elem**	**Middle JH**	**HS**
All to most talk is in English	95	92	95	98	75	86	85	66
Talk is in both English and a non-English Language	2	6	1	<1	11	8	7	22
Most talk is in a non-English language	<1	0	<1	0	7	<1	9	9

[1]From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

This example (Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera, in press) illustrates how a 4th grade teacher allowed students to verbalize their thoughts in Spanish before attempting to express them in English (when necessary):

> Christina considered it her responsibility to teach her students English, and she believed it necessary to provide students with opportunities to practice and use English. In other words, she did not simply insist that students speak English but instead showed students how to go about doing so. When a student answered a question in English with the Spanish word "estufa," Christina translated it to "stove," and added it to a list she was writing on the board. If a child seemed flustered in answering a complex question in English, she asked the child to answer in Spanish and then to try to say it in English.

In our observations of expert teachers, native language responses were always accepted, but students were encouraged to try to express their thoughts in English; however, they were never forced to do so.

Tikunoff et al. and, recently, Lucas and Katz (1994), report on a variety of strategies that teachers in the observed special alternative instructional programs used to facilitate and accommodate students' uses of their primary languages. One example was pairing students from the same language backgrounds during instruction and activities so that the more fluent English-speaking students could assist the less fluent students with understanding the teacher instructions and classroom assignments. Another useful strategy was to encourage students to use bilingual dictionaries, or to get help at home in their primary language from family members who were more fluent with English.

Important Observational Items Not Included Among the Three Key Factors

The 12 items presented in Table 5 did not load on any one of the three key factors. However, several of these are worth examination because of their relevance for understanding effective teaching practices, and the extent to which they were utilized by teachers across the nine programs.

Table 5
Mean Percent of Teachers (N=46) Utilizing Instructional Practice Variables Not Included in the Three Major Factors[1]

	% of Classrooms (N=45)
Frequently Observed	
1. Teacher focuses on English language development as an integral part of the lesson.	86.9
2. Teacher emphasizes meaning rather than the grammatical structure of students' responses.	95.6
3. Teacher encourages high levels of student engagement in completing instructional tasks.	95.6
4. Teacher presents information in both oral and written form.	95.6
5. Teacher makes use of visuals or manipulatives to teach content.	93.4
6. Teacher presents a learning environment that is both business-like and convivial.	89.1
7. Teacher exhibits sensitivity to students' languages and cultures.	86.9
Moderately Observed	
8. Teacher uses advanced organizers for instruction.	80.4
9. Teacher uses students' experiences in teaching content.	65.2
Infrequently Observed	
10. Teacher interrupts instruction to handle student discipline problems.	32.6
11. Teacher makes use of drama, gestures, or mime during instruction.	26.0
12. Teacher incorporates diverse cultures in teaching.	23.9

[1]From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

One item shows that 87% of the teachers consciously focused on English language development as an integral part of the lesson. In other words, they dedicated a portion of each lesson to language-related objectives as opposed to content-related objectives.

Another interesting finding is that only one-fourth of the teachers used gesture and mime to convey information and ideas. As one might expect, this practice was much more prevalent in the elementary grades. Typically, manuals and books on sheltered English place great emphasis on this practice, yet it appears from these research findings that the emphasis may be misplaced.

On the other hand, the use of multiple modalities to present material was a pervasive practice. Ninety-six percent of the sample of teachers presented information

both verbally and in writing. The importance of doing this for enhancing learning and language development is slowly receiving greater emphasis in the literature (Chamot & O'Malley, in press; Scanlon, Duran, Reyes, & Gallego, 1992).

Finally, these findings help elucidate a subtle but crucial issue in the education of language minority students. Although 87% of the teachers exhibited sensitivity to students' cultures and languages, only 24% were found to incorporate material from diverse cultures in their lessons. At first, this may seem surprising, even contradictory.

However, based on our research (Gersten & Woodward, 1994), we infer that many of the teachers viewed their role as assisting students with navigating the transition between the culture from which they came and that of the country in which they were currently living. They may feel it is essential not to show disrespect or lack of interest in diverse cultures, but our research shows that, for example, when Lao students are expected to master the nuances of Navajo and Sioux cultures before they have understood much about the realities of life in their current community, such as San Francisco or San Diego, they can be overwhelmed. Similarly, attempts to teach recent immigrants from Mexico and Guatemala about Eskimo culture is often disorienting and unproductive. We see an increased move toward helping students become acclimated to their new environment and acquiring a better understanding of the culture of the country to which they have immigrated, before overwhelming students with a vast array of cultural diversity (McElroy & Johnson, 1993).

Another aspect of instruction that demonstrates the importance of respect for cultural differences is the finding that teachers in this study felt that "evaluation of students' academic or non-academic performance that is public (i.e. heard by others) and negative may dissuade students from participating in classroom instruction" (p.23). These types of negative evaluations were virtually never observed in the exemplary programs. The researchers found that typically teachers would tend to support or help clarify, rather than provide negative, critical feedback. (See Gersten [1994] and McElroy-Johnson [1993] for further discussion of this critical issue.)

Observations of Student Functional Proficiency: Student Engagement and Success

As might be expected with a group of programs that were selected based in part on their demonstration of improvements in student performance, high rates of student engagement in instructional activities (see Table 6) were observed. Student engagement and involvement were notably higher than that found in Tikunoff's (1985) earlier observational study of bilingual classrooms, where the mean was 82 percent.

Table 6
Percent Student Engagement in Exemplary SAIP Classrooms (N=46), by Grade Level[1]

Level	Percent Engagement
Elementary	97
Middle/Junior High School	90
High School	94
All Grades	92

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

The researchers also found that academic success rates were reasonably high when one considers that students were responding in a second language. The rates for responses to material in printed text were approximately 76 percent. This is a bit lower than the optimal rate of 80 to 85 percent (Fisher et al, 1980), but is nevertheless a high rate for second language learners. In addition, completion rates on academic assignments and activities was 97 percent. It appears that teachers were able to minimize frustration most of the time for many of the students.

CONCLUSIONS

Teaching students for whom English is a second language is a complex endeavor. A serious issue is helping students with the "double demands" required of language minority students – the need to acquire a new language while mastering academic content material in English-based programs. The study by Tikunoff et al. (1991) provides the beginning of an empirical base for defining effective practice and delineates numerous specific strategies. In discussing the findings, we have attempted to elucidate key points by occasionally providing brief illustrations from our own work in the area.

Since this was a descriptive study of features common to programs deemed effective by experts rather than an experimental comparison or program evaluation, no broad statements of generalizability of these findings are possible. Nor can one distinguish firmly between the most and least useful program features. However, the study does provide much useful information for school districts interested in improving services for language minority students.

Tikunoff et al. suggest the findings are most relevant for efforts to serve diverse ethnolinguistic limited-English-proficient student populations from low incidence native language backgrounds. Other research suggests these approaches are effective even when the language minority population is homogeneous (Barrera, 1984; Gersten & Woodward, in press; Stewart, 1993). As Lucas and Katz (1994) assert, in order to truly improve the educational experiences of the increasing numbers of language minority students, we must give "...serious and informed consideration to all strategies and resources..." (p. 559).

Our focus in this paper has emphasized and highlighted the effective instructional practices identified by Tikunoff et al. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from various sources in Tikunoff et al.'s extensive study of effective practice points to two overarching findings for particular instructional practices in exemplary special alternative instructional programs for limited-English proficient students:

- Teachers integrated principles of effective instruction with English language development in subject areas.

- Aspects of the learning environment promoted active use of English.

The findings stress the importance of school districts' willingness to undergo significant restructuring at the school and even district level, in order to respond more flexibly to language minority students' increasingly higher English language proficiency levels. They also point to the need for broad staff training in how to merge English language development with content area instruction.

At the heart of these findings is a clear recognition that language minority students face unique learning challenges that demand innovative practices, but that these practices are well within the grasp of committed teachers – whether monolingual or bilingual – who are provided with relevant knowledge and support and professional development.

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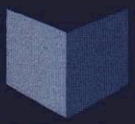

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